



THE
YEARS OF
YOUTH
By
HORACE ROWE

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THE
YEARS OF YOUTH:

A SERIES OF
ORIGINAL POEMS.

BY
✓
HORACE ROWE.
"

" Youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears,
Than settled Age his sables and his weeds."

33
PHILADELPHIA: J
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1873.



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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER AND MOTHER,
AS A VOTIVE TRIBUTE OF FILIAL AFFECTION,
THIS VOLUME HAS BEEN INSCRIBED
BY THEIR DEVOTED SON,
THE AUTHOR.

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PROEM.

“Pictoribus atque poetis
Quid libet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.”

“UPON this hint I spake,” and now before the public venture to appear.

Not, however, with the sanguine hope of waking up in the morning and finding myself famous; for it would scarcely be venial, and certainly most *outré*, to suppose that a production of this kind—written when it seems that the golden age of poesy is past, and by one whose mind is not inured to the storm and sunshine of maturer years, but one who, in age, is but a child in law—should create any unusual excitement in the literary world.

Nevertheless,

“’Tis pleasant, sure, to see one’s name in print;
A book’s a book, although there’s nothing in ’t.”

Yet it is not alone owing to this suggestion that I am induced to give publicity to these youthful effusions, but with a more creditable aim than to be saluted as the author of a book.

Poetry, with me, has ever been a passion; and what is written is but the voice of the heart, and not the elaborate diction of one, “the motions of whose spirit are as dull as night, and whose affections dark as Erebus.”

Still, I do not advance this as an argument for obtrud-

ing myself, at so early an age, on the patience of the public; for, in truth, the paramount cause in publishing this volume is for the pleasure of those who have honored me with their friendship, and have not thought unworthy of appreciation these heirs of my youthful invention. And with all save them I am scarcely less than an intruder.

But, if there be one, though personally unknown to the author, who, forgetting its faults and juvenile inconsistencies, can while away an otiose hour in pleasant perusal of its contents, he will not only feel thankful for this foreign appreciation, but happy in the acquisition of such honor.

To even intimate that I have been wholly original would be simply absurd; for, verily, "there is no new thing under the sun." However, though I have imitated, at length, those authors with whom I have been most conversant, I have not been one of those numerous plagiarists—reaping where I have not sown, and gathering where I have not strewed.

In the conception of the greater part of the subjects, I claim some originality.

I am not altogether unconscious that a volume of this character, by one to "fame unknown," launched upon the high sea of literature, will have many an adverse wave to buffet, and many a Scylla and Charybdis to encounter, not having the pilot, Experience, to point the way, or a friendly beacon to light it to a hospitable haven.

Still I feel confident that it will not fail to elicit the charity of many, and, with this hope, leave it at the mercy of wind and wave.

AUSTIN, TEXAS.

THE YEARS OF YOUTH.

TO EMMIE.

MY sister, my sweet sister, thou
Art left alone of many a charm,
This heavy heart of grief to warm,
And teach it yet to bow !

To thee in lonely hours I turn !
In thee a vital solace find
To cool the frenzy of that mind
Which else would ceaseless burn !

Thou art the last of many a gem
Which deck'd the crown of early life,
And made it with such radiance rife—
A lonely diadem !

A diadem ! Yes, thou to me
Art richer, rarer, brighter far,
Than e'en the fairest lighted star
Which night flings on the sea.

And thou art dearer still when comes,
On memory's wings, the putrid past—
For o'er my soul its shadows cast
Remembrance of its tombs!

Parental tombs, which spread a night
Of sorrow o'er our roseate days,
And hid in gloom their purest rays—
A parent's smile of light!

A parent's smile! oh, heaven, the bliss
That it doth lend to childish heart!
If there a feeling pure may start,
'Tis then and 'tis of this.

For I have known that ebb and flow;
But 'tis not now—forgive the tear—
Yet will I weep, for musing here
Tells me no more I know!

And we, sweet sister, once did feel
Such halcyon joys around us cast,
Like dreams of fancy flitting past
With rapture to reveal;

But they are gone! and ne'er again
Shall from the happier years roll back
The clouds which left their orient black,
Or make it bright as then.

Yet, be it so! for still in thee
There lives a hope which cannot die,
While life-fire lights thy darksome eye,
And lets it beam on me.

Oh, happy hope! Oh, blissful boon!
A sister's fair, unfading love—
A spark empyrean from above
To change my night to noon!

And while its gleam o'er life shall shine,
Fate's darkest frown shall not be felt,
But 'neath its radiance grief shall melt,
And brightest bliss be mine!

OCTOBER, 1871.



DUKE D'ENGHIEN.

"By torchlight the unfortunate prince was led down the winding staircase which led into a fosse of the château. There he saw, through the gray mist of the morning, a file of soldiers drawn up for his execution. Calmly he cut off a lock of his hair, and, taking his watch from his pocket, requested an officer to solicit Josephine to present these tokens of his love to the Princess de Rohan."—*Abbott's Life of Napoleon*, vol. i., chap. xxvii.

'TWAS midnight; and dark rolling clouds obscured
The fair-faced moon and all her glittering train;
And now and then a flash of lightning pour'd
Its flames volcanic on the nightly plain;
And Heaven's artillery, as if in disdain,
Like the deep notes of some far-sounding knell,
Fell on the ear of night, with a deep mystic spell.

The elements seem'd fraught with warfare, as
When on Heaven's plain engaged those angel hosts
In supernatural conflict, like a mass
Of fire and billow on the Stygian coasts!—
A night when hell seem'd happiest in his boasts,
And demons trod the earth, in proud array,
Sovran of souls, which were beyond their power by day!

That was a night which was while bloody war
Had razed proud cities and crush'd brave hearts;

When dark destruction, in his gory car,
Had long swept earth, as death the menial marts;
And still no surcease to the deadly darts
Gave peace to earth, or smiles to Heaven gave—
But death, despair, destruction, and the gory grave!

Oh, what a night was that! A night of death!
While sleeping, wrapp'd in visionary love,
Lay Engbien, heedless of a foeman's breath,
Spurning that watch which despots base approve,
And oft thro' halls palatial ceaseless move;
But there, unmindful of or friend or foe,
He dream'd of bliss, and not of fast approaching woe.

The empress of his heart, too, heedless slept,
Upon her royal couch, in splendor laid;
Nor dream'd of tears (tho' many a queen hath wept,
When pomp of royalty their forms display'd;)
But there she lay in visions undismay'd;
Yet hapless slumbers—hapless dreams are hers—
Only to wake to woe—to wash away in tears!

Yet who is there his destiny may know?
And who conjecture what his doom may be?
All still will hope, tho' every hour bring woe,
For life gives hope, as time eternity;
E'en those whose hearts are heaviest, like the sea,
Will still rebound to meet their moon of joy,
Tho' it but hope-light lend—reality destroy!

Now was Duke D'Engbien's dream, protracted, broke
By iron tread of foemen thro' the hall;

By foemen's harsh salute, and harsher stroke
Of clashing steel, which, echoing 'long the wall,
Despair foreboded like death's dismal call!
He woke—and as a more than servile slave
They bore him bound, not as the bravest of the brave.

The princess heard the midnight wail sweep by
Upon the trembling air, and as a knell,
She caught the sound, and knew—she deem'd not why—
Yet love prophetic did the crisis tell!
Her star-eyed hope was flown, and, like a spell,
Despair her soul seized, and she sank beneath
That weight of misery, which seem'd not less than death!

Then, from that land where blue-eyed beauties roam,
The land of chivalry—the Runic Rhine—
They bore him to his distant native home—
Fair France—the hapless prey of war and wine.
But, ah! who may his destiny divine?
Is treason his? A nation answers, yea!
Then finish'd is his doom—his life-light must decay.

The rosy-finger'd morn had not yet sleek'd
The ebon down of night, but still, unmoved,
Upon the world's black bough, she perch'd all bleak'd
By wintry winds which icily still roved,
Like wandering spirits lost and unbeloved,
Along the mountain, when a phalanx form'd
To chill the ebbing blood which Enghien's bosom warm'd.

His prayer for pardon had, alas, been vain!
For tardy was the plea, and late it came

To him who ever wept above the slain ;
Forgave even treachery, as he warr'd for fame,
Who sued for peace, and even pride did tame
That blood might not be shed ; but fate forbade
That Enghien should be freed, and thus great nations glad.

So at that dismal hour, within a vale
As dismal as the shadowy vale of death,
The warriors paused, and not a nerve did quail,
And not a sigh portray'd an anxious breath ;
But all was still as flowers upon the heath.
A light from one cold glimmering lamp did shed
A deeper awe upon that scene so like the dead.

Then was the silence broke by him the doom'd :
“Take this!” and forth a golden chain he drew,
Which even for a while the darkness 'lumed,
“And give to her whose breast is nobly true,
Who well can feel what woman's heart can brew,
The plebeian emperor's spouse, and pray that she
Will bear this home to her who long shall weep for me!”

Thus spake the hapless duke his last desire ;
Then, kneeling low, unfalteringly he said,
“I die for my king and for France—then fire !”
The volley flew of unrelenting lead,
And he, young Enghien, fell a martyr dead !
And there he slept, in turf unhonor'd long,
Till times more happy wash'd away the truthless wrong.

Brave was his soul, and noble was his aim ;
No base conspirator against the great—

On battle-fields he fought 'gainst rising fame,
Nor tried in treason his high pride to sate;
And when it came he sternly bow'd to fate,
And met his doom as ever do the brave—
High glory's silver tide his name shall ever lave!
JULY, 1871.



IN MEMORIAM.

“Happy are they who die in their youth when their renown is around them.”—OSSIAN.

ON Manassas' field so gory,
 'Neath a canopy of glory,
Fought brave Jackson's gallant band;
 And amid the din of battle,
 'Mid the fatal musket's rattle,
Many died to save their land.

In this conflict stood my brother,
 Fighting bravely, as the other
Sons of our dear sunny land;
 And within this three days' struggle
 He had watch'd the blood to guggle,
Warm from hearts, to stain the sand.

But the last day, how ill-fated
 To that gallant heart elated
With the hope of gaining all!
 For, when the foe was flying
 In dismay, o'er dead and dying,
Thro' him pierced a fatal ball!

It was just when day was fading,
 When the pall of night was shading

Earth and battle-field with gloom ;
And upon that sun in sorrow
Many gazed, for on the morrow
They must fill the silent tomb.

But, his dauntless soul unfearing,
E'en in death his lips were cheering :—
“ Forward—onward—save the day ! ”
These the last words that he utter'd,
And as still the cannon mutter'd,
Pass'd his soul from earth away !

And still on that field he slumbers,
Silent, with the dust of numbers
Of the friend and foe that fell ;
And no more the musket's rattle
Will awake that form to battle
For the land he loved so well !



TO E. T.

"Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens."—HORAT.

FAIR as the moonbeam's tender light
Which smiles upon the ocean blue—
Sweet as the rose-bud bathed in dew—
Lovely as is the star-gemm'd night
Which doth thro' heaven in beauty move—
Pure as the prayer thou waft'st above—
Art *thou!* then who could help but love?

I love, and 'tis no idle dream
That lives undying in my soul,
But is an ever-ebbing stream
That onward flows without control.

And when the sparks of thy dark eyes
Beam on me with their magic spell,
I feel the waves to higher rise,
And, like an ocean, wildly swell.

And when upon me thou dost smile—
Tho' rarely, yet I better deem
The charm, and its enchanting wile
Makes e'en this world empyrean seem.

Then, oh, believe that I do love !
That all this heart is wholly thine ;
For were I in yon heaven above,
With angels, I would for *thee* pine !



TO THE SAME.

THINE eyes are lit with more than mortal fire,
And darkly in their midnight splendor shine;
Emitting radiance oft that seems divine—
Now glowing softly, now elate with ire,
Now wakening hope, now bidding hope retire.
As Fancy forms and then destroys her shrine,
So shifting feelings move that breast of thine,
Thou goddess of my heart, and sole desire!
No eyes but midnight-rolling eyes can bind
A spell, enchanting, round this heart of mine;
The soft, sweet eyes of blue may sometimes find
My soul in admiration at their shrine,
But I must worship such as once consign'd
Proud Troy to ruins—such eyes, such eyes as *thine*!

1870.



THE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

THINE image bright shall ever live
 Within my heart's unchanging cell,
And time shall only serve to give
 A brighter lustre to the spell;
 E'en absence never can impel
My soul to wander from its queen,
 Tho' fate hath long since rung the knell
Of cherish'd hope, by hands unseen,
And sung a requiem o'er "What might have been."



I A N T H E.

A DREAM.

THE soul is a Paradise, amid whose rich bowers
In beauty are blooming the rarest of flowers;
And its sunshine is smiles, whose delicate ray
Diffuses a lustre more bright than the day;
And joy is the dew which, like orient gems,
Sparkles bright on their leaves and gives life to their stems.

Delightful Elysium! more charming in bloom
Than that which was wither'd by Heaven's sad doom;
And, like that, in its bowers a temple divine
For Love hath been built, and the heart is its shrine;
And its priestess is Hope, whose nymphical smile
Hath more power to lure than her god to beguile.

But, alas! has this Eden no autumn whose breath
Blights its summer-blown bloom, and wraps it in death?
Does no winter, with storms of unhappiness, lower,
And, obscuring its sunshine, destroy every flower?
Are the dreams which in spring-time made radiant its sky
Never dimm'd in their glow—never lost to the eye?

Why question of me? Ask the aged in years,
Whose lives have been nurtured in anguish and tears;
Whose brows bear the marks and resentments of time,
And whose hearts are not free from the' infection of crime.

These, these may impart what my heart has not known,
For their harvest is come—do they reap what was sown.

But let me not now, with reflections like these,
Make unhappy that theme which is writ but to please.
For, Ianthe, thy beauty, which ever hath wrought
In my heart like a magic, and lived in each thought,
Not content with its rule o'er the mind when awake,
Hath entranced it in slumbers with dreams for thy sake.

And this is the dream which the goddess of vision
Reveal'd unto me :—In thy soul's bright Elysian
Methought I was led, by thy welcoming tone,
'Mid its bowers enchanted to wander alone.
It was morning, methought, and the sunshine and dew,
Which gave to the flowers so lovely a hue,
Were blended in one, like the smile and the tear,
Which gleam'd in thine eye when beholding me near.

But when, in my fancy, my footsteps had stray'd
Thro' all the bright paths which thy virtues had made,
Thy voice gave me welcome to enter that fane
Which no mortal before was allow'd to profane,
But only the footsteps of angels had trod
Thro' its sacredness, fit for the shrine of a god ;
And its secrets no oracle yet had reveal'd,
For the book of its fate had forever been seal'd.

Oh, what was my joy ! What transport divine
Elated my heart while beholding that shrine !
But to picture its splendor a Raphael must paint,
For the pen hath not power, and words are too faint.
Yet thus, while my spirit was wild with delight,
From an altar which still had been hidden from sight

A veil thou didst take—oh, ethereal bliss!
 Had my soul ever dream'd of such glory as this?
 For there, wreathed in flowers the brightest in hue,
Was my name! But, scarcely believing it true,
 “A dream in a dream,” I whisper'd, when thou,
 Who unmoved and in silence had watch'd me till now,
 Softly smiling, replied, “*Not* ‘a dream in a dream,’
 But an offering to *thee* of love and esteem!”

Thus rapture was mine which gods in their state
 Might envy, not knowing devotion so great!

But, alas! in that moment so fraught with delight,
 A change swept my vision with termagant blight.
 Those flowers, that late on the altar were blown
 In freshness of bloom, had faded and gone!
 I then turn'd to thee—oh, Mercy, forbear!
 Thy face, late so lovely, was pale with despair;
 And thine eye, which had blended the smile and the tear
 In token of joy when beholding me near,
 Now was glaring in frenzy, and seem'd to upbraid
 And curse me alone for the wreck that was made!

My lips tried to speak, but no utterance could give
 The silence to break, or Hope to revive,
 Who, pallid in death, on the altar was lying,
 While her god near her wept, tho' himself lay a dying!

Thus my spirit, dismay'd at the frown of despair
 Which had mantled in gloom all the loveliness there,
 Was scarce less despairing; but waked from its trance,
 By breaking the spell which was caught from thy glance,
 As, touch'd with new life, I grasp'd at thy form,
 But it fled from my presence with shrieks of alarm.

I follow'd, but vain was my utmost endeavor,
For gone from my sight was thy image forever!

Oh, tell me, Ianthe, thou fairest and best,
Is this but a vision awaked in the breast
By the fiend of delirium to harrow up fear
And to wither those hopes which to life are most dear?
Oh, answer! and let me from anguish be free,
Or finish that doom which is destined for me!



STANZAS

ON THE DEATH OF KLEBER JONES, COUSIN TO
THE AUTHOR.

THERE'S a lone and restless longing
In our stricken hearts to-night;
For a form we deeply cherish'd
In the arms of death has perish'd
Ever more from mortal sight!

And to-morrow we must bear him
To the sad and silent tomb,
Yet his image in each bosom
Like a flower must brightly blossom,
Fresh forever in its bloom.

Let the winding-sheet be taken
From his face a moment now,
Let us view once more those features,
Purest, noblest of earth's creatures,
Let us press again that brow.

It is done! and tears of anguish
Gather in each watchful eye;
Yet we well may weep, for never
Did the hand of Fate dis sever
Such a richly golden tie!

Who can view his life, and wonder
That he thus so early died,
When the good are always taken
Early from the breasts that waken
Deep for them affection's tide ?

Heaven gave to him his mission—
It was short, yet goodly done ;
And when ended all was ended,
And his soul above ascended,
And a crown of glory won !

Noble Kleber ! hapless Kleber !
Loved by all who knew thee well,
Friends are round thee weeping sadly,
And each heart with grief is madly
Breaking, with no hope to quell.

Like a young and brilliant meteor
Burning thro' the nightly sky,
Did thy young life shed its radiance,
Soft as music's latest cadence,
On the forms that pass'd thee by.

But sleep on, embalm'd in slumbers,
Where no thought, or dream, may come !
We may weep, yet tears of gladness
Still will chase away the sadness,
For thou art in Heaven—at home !

TO EULALIE.

SWEET Eulalie, a fairer flower
Than thou wast never born ;
To change the sad to happy hour
Is thine alone.

Thy soft eyes, gleaming with a glow
Which scarce of mortal seems,
Can make the darkest-bosom'd woe
A realm of beams !

And thy sweet voice, so soft and low,
Like music of a lute,
Awakes within the breast a flow
Of rapture mute.

And as I gaze upon thy face,
So lovely and so fair,
I mark the rarest, purest grace
Which earth can bear.

And on my heart its smile hath wrought
An effigy so bright,
That time, tho' with effacement fraught,
Shall fail to blight.

For thou, sweet Eulalie, wast made
To charm away the care
Which else would my dark soul pervade,
And canker there.

Then live on in thy purity,
Thou fair as saint above !
A guardian angel unto me,
And Queen of Love !



SONNETS TO NIGHT.

I.

MOST glorious Night! with moon and stars bedight!
The master-piece of God's imperial hand;
Sublime thou art, and beautiful and grand!
Creatures of heaven might view thee with delight,
And strike their harps in praise of such a sight!
The deep-blue ocean may defy control,
And in his anger o'er proud navies roll,
Or shake his hoary locks, and man affright,
Yet still he bounds with joy thy kiss to greet,
And owns thee goddess, thou fair moon of light!
With hopes, with loves, with joys thou art replete;
With thee bright Fancy fondly takes her flight;
The nightingale to thee pours music sweet,
And I do love thee, fair Enchantress, Night!

II.

E'en when thy gorgeous sheen in darkness lies,
And furious storms obscure thy sky serene,
Then art thou most sublime, and even then
I love to watch thee, see the clouds arise,
And hear the thunders peal along the skies,

Now low and deep, now loud with deafening clash,
And view with joy the fiery lightning's flash,
So darkly glaring thro' the storm it flies.

Ah! 'tis a wildly glorious gloomy sight!
Who hath not felt his own soul grander while
He watch'd its power from some commanding height?
The dark, the fierce, imperious, frantic smile
Of midnight storm, rejoicing in his might,
And laying in ruins full many an antique pile!

NOVEMBER, 1870.



TO LILIE LENORE.

OH, Lilie Lenore !
Thy sweet little form,
With its magical spell,
Takes my feelings by storm,

And my soul bears along
Thro' some fairy-kept dell,
Where the muses' soft song
Every sorrow doth quell.

And thy beautiful eye,
With its nymphical hue,
From the clear summer sky
Caught its opulent blue.

And on me when it falls,
As sweet dimples doth chase
Each other in glee
O'er thy angelic face,

Overpower'd I feel,
And my bosom swells high :
Oh, could I reveal
What is felt in a sigh !

Thou then might'st conceive
How madly I love ;
And I know then thy heart
Would in sympathy move !

For thou art a flower
That blooms in my heart ;
And thou of my life
Art the loveliest part.

But, Lilie Lenore,
Why essay I to write ?
Human pen is too weak
My love to indite !

APRIL, 1870.



THE JUDGMENT.

THE Saviour! the Saviour! the only loved Son,
As morn on the orient resplendently bright,
Comes forth in his glory, his season is done,
And redemption once given hath faded in night!

The trumpet! the trumpet of God sounding deep
From the vault of high Heaven shakes the low living
Earth;

And nations awake from their long dreamless sleep,
Confounded with awe at the great Judgment's birth!

The trumpet! the trumpet of God sounds again;
And the heaven-born host comes elated with love,
While their mystical harps, in one swelling strain,
The fabric celestial with melody move!

The trumpet! the trumpet! is echoed once more
Thro' all heights, and all depths, and all oceans afar,
And the sin-stricken souls, innumerable, pour,
Distorted with fear, to the Great Judgment bar!

The sentence! the sentence! oh, hear ye the curse!
'Tis the voice of the King, and his anger is high;
And that loud-wailing throng thro' the distance disperse,
And gloom gathers o'er, and forever they die!

“ Oh, Mercy! oh, Mercy !” is ringing aloud
From the angels which guarded those spirits of yore,
As they gaze on that ruin which horrors enshroud,
And weep with compassion, “ Oh, lost evermore !”

And downward ! now downward ! irremediably gone !
Thro' the blackest of gloom sinks this death-living host,
From the eye of e'en Pity to wander alone,
And where woe and despair shriek, “ Eternally lost !”



THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY.

SPRING is coming on in beauty,
Hail'd by all the glorious earth;
And her voice is sweetly ringing
With the songs of joy and mirth.

And her path is strewn with flowers,
Garlands wreathed about her brow,
Robed in Nature's richest costume
She is coming gaily now.

All the world is up and doing,
With a heart as light and free
As the little birds that carol
Round them in melodious glee.

And the' industrious farmers early
Hasten onward to the field,
For this is the time to labor
If their harvest much would yield.

If abundance they would gather
Of the fruit which autumn bears,
They must labor now, or never,
For the Present's only theirs.

* * * * *

Youth, to you this time is given—
This bright spring-time of your life;
It you must improve, or falter
In this world's unkindly strife.

Let not petty trifles turn you,
Such as maidens' smiles of art;
But look thoughtful down the future
With a proud, defiant heart.

*What is life without distinction ?
What a name without a name
That can rest in blazing letters
On the tablet wrought of Fame ?*

Would you die and be forgotten,
Like the ripples of a stream ?
Or the bare and baseless fabric
Of a sluggard's idle dream ?

Then know this : Without exertion
You will not behold your name
Blazon'd on that banner floating
O'er the battlements of Fame !

Ask, where shall my name be written ?
Then but mark the loftiest height ;
Aim at this, o'ercome each barrier,
Reach the pinnacle, and *write !*

Write by merit, not dishonor,
Nor by avaricious wealth;
For the wreath of glory fadeth
When 'tis won by treacherous stealth.

FEBRUARY, 1870.



THE HEROINES OF HISTORY.

I.

BACK rolls the cloud of years ! and to the eye,
Eager for wisdom, rolls an orient by.
No bright sun, rising on the azure way,
Is yet beheld to fleck the misty gray ;
But stars unnumber'd, bright in every clime,
Beam forth and gem the glorious sky of Time.
Some, fair as Sirius rising on the night,
Enchant the soul, and wrap it in delight ;
Yet others, like the Pleiad sisters, shine
Faint in their splendor, tho' not less divine ;
And some, perchance, like one of them at even,
Have wander'd truant from the heights of heaven !

Oh, thou mysterious Past ! sublime in deeds
Which give to thee the brightest of all meeds,
With rapture now I hail thee, and implore
The deep-hid secrets of thy latent lore,—
Thine aid in song to one who in thy light
Would bathe his spirit in aspiring flight.

II.

To thee, thou first and fairest Bride of Song,
The minstrel's harp is waked ! To thee belong
The praise of distant ages, and the strain
Which, echoing down the years, was not in vain

To prove to man that wisdom, wealth, and power
Are naught to him when Woman claims the hour.

When the perfidious Shepherd rashly bore,
In Idean ships, from Grecian shore,
The hostess Helen, Nereus on the deep
Diffused a calm, and bade the waves to sleep,
That he might sing the dire and dismal fate
Which did upon that treacherous deed await,
And sound thro' ages this immortal strain,
“Proud Troy is lost, and lost old Priam's reign!”

In vain shalt thou, O Paris! with thy love,
The passing hours in happy dalliance prove;
In vain shall Venus lend her aid, and spread
Her ægis round thee in thy adulterous bed;
For, lo! there comes from mighty Grecia's coast
An injured husband, with avenging host,
And Pallas, raging in her fallen pride,
With chariot and with fury seeks thy bride.
And tho' Achilles, famed in deeds of war,
Shall long procrastinate thy evil star,
Yet after storms of certain winters pour
Their hurtless fury on thy joyous shore,
Achaian flames shall o'er fair Ilion rise,
And sweep her glory from beneath the skies!*

III.

Next hail to thee, dark-eyed Egyptian, hail!
Thou second Venus! What did power avail

* Horace, Ode XV., Bk I.

Against thy wiles? What did a Cæsar show?
A heart as weak as when the turbid flow
Of threatening waves impell'd his soul to shrink
And cry out, "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!"
Courageous Cæsar! proud, and stern, and brave!
Poor Antony, made the Enchantress' slave!
To this the highest praise and honor flow;
Rome's mightiest monarch all the ages know;
To that, the scorn or shame of time is tost—
And wherefore? Ay! on fatal Actium's coast
His star of glory sank in blood and wave,
And that once so, he always was the slave.

To thee, fair Queen, and to thy charms, but one
Proved equal still, and that was Juda's son.*
Forsooth, he did "out-herod Herod" then,
Or had a soul unlike to other men.
A prey to every passion which can cling
Around the heart, and goad to crime a king,
Yet did the ægis then of Pallas guard
Him, as Ulysses' son† when tempted hard.

Thou couldst not, with thy Stygian glances, start
One green-eyed monster in his moveless heart.
Thou camest, thou saw'st, but to conquer still
Was not of thee, or break his stubborn will.
How marvelous was this! Had from thee gone
Those wild enchantments which were thine alone?
Or did the lovely face of his loved queen,
Poor Mariamne, come before him then?

* Herod the Great. See Josephus, vol. i., bk. xv., c. iv.

† Telemachus, in Fénelon.

Why ask of thee? 'Tis thou, O king! must say :
Was all thy love then hers whom thou didst after slay?

IV.

Aurelian! didst thou spurn, at first, with scorn,
The triumphs of a female warrior* born,
And in some distant province still command
Thy legions bold to march upon her land,
To wave their eagles, in triumphant pride,
Above that power which had e'en Rome defied?
In sooth! but still the panting courier came,
And bade thee rise and make defense for fame.

Like mist before the rising king of day,
His mighty legions had been swept away;
Like flying clouds before the tempest's breath,
They fled from her who bore the seal of death;
And thou, proud monarch, with remorse and shame,
At length came forth 'gainst woman's rising fame;
And tho' thy pride had whisper'd, "One fell blow
Shall sweep her power away, and leave her low,"
Still thou didst find that where her arms were seen
She rode in splendor there, a peerless queen!
And when against her thy avenging car
Swept, like a flame, along the path of war,
Her courage gleam'd amid the mad affray,
Like meteors flashing in the eyes of day.
Thy pride gave o'er, then genius lit thy brow,
And conquer'd her who was not known to bow.

* Zenobia.

Bold Queen ! how did Ambition lure thy soul
The waves of war against old Rome to roll ?
How did the dreams of glory fill thy breast
With such wild madness as this lofty quest ?
To dream, to hope, that thou couldst stem the tide
Of carnage fierce and 'gainst a monarch ride,
A monarch who upon the proudest throne
Of all the world sat, like a god, alone !
And pictured to thy frenzied fancy how
Thy fame should rise, and he be made to bow,
That thou in thy triumphant car shouldst ride
Along the streets of Rome, in queenly pride.
But how, alas ! to thee, as oft to man,
Did glory prove a dream, as life a span !

Thou didst in visionary grandeur sweep
Thro' that imperial city ! Didst thou sleep ?
Ah ! no ; Ambition mock'd thee, for, behold !
That chariot which thou saw'st triumphant roll'd
Within those Capitolian walls, and thou
The victor crown'd with diadem'd brow,
Was fame's illusion ! It mov'd there, but, lo !
Thou wast a *captive* unto Rome and woe.
And that high monarch whom, in vision, thou
Beheldst in homage and in suppliance bow,
Now leads thee on behind thy regal car,
To grace the triumph of a glorious war.

Ambition, what art thou ? A devilish flame,
That makes the soul incessant thirst for fame,
And lures it, with thy phantom beacon, where
Unslaked it dies in frenzy and despair !

This is Ambition! Ay, behold it here :
She saw a world—she grasp'd—she found a bier!

V.

When thro' fair France her furious foemen pour'd,
And devastation stalk'd, uncheck'd, abroad,
In jnnocency slept the queen of war,
Unknown, unsung; but as the radiant star
Of Bethlehem proclaim'd Messiah come,
So she arose a heraldry of doom
To foul oppression, and brought freedom home.

Maid of Orleans! in sooth the queen of war;
For where thy banner waved, like light, afar,
Victory and glory shone, and bade the storm
Of war to lull before thy conquering arm!
Thou wast no witch! nor yet a ghost of death,
To blight ten thousand with one withering breath;
But guilty Superstition, when thy form
Shone thro' the darkness of the battle's storm,
Like ghosts of night before the eye of day,
In terror fled from carnage and affray.

But, hapless Heroine! ere thy gentle life
Had been inured to country-guarding strife,
The king of terrors rose upon thy way,
And blasted freedom from the arms of day!
Yes, freedom; for it did not light thy breast—
Thyself wast freedom, and its cause thy quest.

VI.

Thou wast no warrior, England's proudest queen,
But yet the greatest which all time has seen.

Tho' vain and haughty, proud and envious still,
Yet hadst thou, like thy sire, an iron will.

In thy fair reign behold what genius shone
Amid the gloom which ignorance long had known.
The music of the Father-Bard* still fell
Along thy shores with soft symphonious swell;
Aspiring youth the echo caught, and flung
His fingers o'er the lyre that lay unstrung.
Attuned anew, it waked with music deep;
For, lo! the Prince of Song its chords did sweep.

Prosperity arose, and wealth and power,
Vaunting in pride, proclaim'd as theirs the hour.
Thy great dominion, spreading still afar,
Defiance bade to e'en the rage of war,
And thou, fair maiden Queen, beheld thy name
Emblazon'd first among the few of fame.
But, ah! foul Envy, with his venom'd tooth,
Gnaw'd at thy heart, and made thee murder truth;
Made thee forget that in an evil hour
The storms of wrath did o'er thine own head lower
And would have doom'd thee, had not Mercy come
And touch'd the heart of her who bore the name
Of even Bloody! Yet when thou didst hold
The regal sceptre and the seal of gold,
Thou didst not mercy show to one who stood
Powerless in thy power, but thirsted for her blood.

Oh, cruel deed! oh, unrelenting doom!
In exchange for a throne to give—a tomb!

* Chaucer.

Ah ! fate, thou art inscrutable ! To man
Thou seem'st unjust in many a secret plan.
Behold the mystery of this dark decree—
Withheld the doom of one, that she might be
The murderer of another ! Teach us how
To seeming wrongs in silence mute to bow !

VII.

The purple clouds have once again in gloom
Hid from the eye the orient in its bloom,
And those great secrets which the dead Past hold
Have been, like dying day, in darkness roll'd.
The eager eye in vain attempts to peer
Amid the night chaotic, and with fear
Recoils within the soul, perchance to dream
Of dim Futurity, and its dark stream
Gliding along life's shore, and bearing fast
It and the Present to the wakeless Past !

In dreams of fancy I beheld arise
The bygone years ; with rapture and surprise
I saw awake the heroines of old time,
And told their deeds of mercy or of crime.
They reign'd o'er empires, but have vanish'd now,
And only deck the Past's sepulchral brow !

VIII.

But, hail ! thou Heroine of my Heart ! To thee
The lyre is still awaked, and e'er shall be.
To thee its first young song did proudly swell,
And of thy beauty to the Muses tell ;

And now, with other queens, it bids thee rise,
And test the lustre of thy darkling eyes.
'Twould paint thy graces, but the pen gives o'er!
For words are idle, and would speak no more;
And Fancy falters in her venturous flight,
And only prays to bask beneath the light
Which from thy loveliness in radiance beams,
And there in slumber rest, a child in dreams!



TO MARY.

SWEET Mary! the fates have decreed
That we from each other should part;
And tho' thy fair bosom shall bleed,
And sad grow thy desolate heart,

Yet thy grief shall not be alone;
My heart shall respond to thy woe,
And, when from my Mary I'm gone,
No other fair idol shall know.

May Heaven's high Ruler with love
Thy pathway from evil defend;
May pleasures thy heart ever move,
And grief with thy joy never blend.

May happiness gleam o'er thy soul,
And peace be its bright guiding star,
With e'en not a trouble to roll
O'er thy spirit, its quiet to mar.

This ever shall be the fond prayer
Which I for my Mary shall breathe,
Tho' fate should forbid that I share
The smiles which for me she would wreath.

And tho' I may roam far away
From her, 'neath some fair alien sky,
My heart shall revert to the day
When I first felt the glance of her eye.

For how could I ever forget
A being so gentle and true ?
This is all that I have to regret,
That we sever soon, but adieu !

MAY, 1870.



STANZAS

ON THE DEATH OF ADAH ISAACS MENKEN.

“Oh, I am wild—wild!

Angels of the weary-hearted, come to thy child.
Spread your white wings over me!

Tenderly, tenderly,
Lovingly, lovingly,
Plead for me, plead for me!”

MISERERE! Miserere!

Oh, wildly chant to-night!
For she, who was the Queen of Song,
Has gone to join the sainted throng
In the far-off Realm of Light.

Her life was young, yet hope was dead;
And only love was there,—
A living love to light the gloom
Which gather'd darkly round the tomb
Of her so wildly fair!

A fairer form was never seen,
A lovelier face unknown;
Yet Sorrow early sought her breast,
And slowly robb'd it of its rest,
Till she and it were one.

Her "Heritage" was wretchedness—
 "Cold friends and causeless foes!"
Yet she was Fancy's favorite child,
And Grace and Genius round her smiled,
 Like stars on nightly snows.

And Beauty gave her every charm
 Which nymph or houri had;
Yet envious Fortune gave no gem,
Nor deck'd her brow with diadem,
 But left her lone and sad.

Wild and weird was her every thought,
 And wondrous strange her dreams;
Her mind explored e'en depths unknown,
The Stygian shore, the Aiden zone,
 Till her song a spectre seems.

Yet she early learn'd to blindly bow
 At Love's seductive shrine;
But her life was cursed, for her idol fled,
And she was left to misery wed,—
 To weep and to repine!

Then let us sing her own sad lay,
 A requiem for the dead,—
That "year ago" when her heart was won,
When a heartless wretch her life undone,
 And left her to misery wed.

Oh, Queen of Song! how sad the strain
 Which thy wild harp impels!

It charms the soul with its airy wile,
And transforms life to a dream, or smile
Which lives in mystic spells.

Miserere ! Miserere !

Then wildly chant to-night !
For the Queen of Song has pass'd from earth,
And seraphs hail her heavenly birth
In that rosy Realm of Light !



AN IMPROMPTU LAMPOON ON
FRIEND JACK.

AS all may discern, young Ralta's a rhymist ;
In English he soars, but in Scotch is sublimest ;
And like a proud eagle he raises his pinions,
And flits beyond earth to old Fancy's dominions.
Be his theme e'er so humble, he rises aloft,—
Now wild with enchantment, now tender and soft :
He eclipses in beauty the strains of a Scott,
And poor Burns, tho' exalted, must now be forgot,
And Milton's in danger ! Oh, Byron, awake,
And again strike the harp for your own glory's sake—
What ! are its strings broke ? Then your fame must grow
black,
For, behold, a great poet beats hard on your track ;
And with champings and brayings he comes like a Jack
And naught but a Muse dares encumber his back !



LINES TO — — —.

ACCOMPANYING A BOUQUET.

THESE fragile flowers I send to thee,
An emblem of that hope so fair
That bloom'd enrapturing unto me
When first I saw thy beauty rare.
But as they soon shall fade away,
And lose their bright and beauteous bloom,
So died that hope in dark decay
When late thy frown bespoke its doom.

Yet as their fragrance still shall live,
And linger pining thro' the air,
Thus shall my love unceasing give
Its sweets to thee, its idol fair !
Ah ! yes ; it never will depart,
But long will wreathe its tendrils bright
Around my unrequited heart,
And bless the breath which did it blight !



A PANEGYRIC ON WOMAN.*

“WOMAN, thy vows are traced in sand,”

Was sung by one in youthful prime,
Before his eagle eye had scann'd

Fame's summit, towering up sublime.

And when he won, in later time,
Its gleaming height—his lofty aim—
And there, with pride, inscribed his name,
Fresh imprecations moved his heart,
And at her breast each deadly dart
Was slung with rude, unflinching aim,
Until he cursed his own high fame!
Until his life had reach'd that state
When all around was desolate,
When all, without her radiant smile,
Was dark as midnight on the Nile.

Then could he now to her fond breast
Return and claim an hour of rest,
And there his head in calmness lay,
As when in young life's early day,
Before his feeling heart had froze
As chill as moveless Alpine snows?

* The paraphrase of a prosaic panegyric on Woman by a young schoolfellow.

Ah! no; for shame had taught his heart
That in its own unquiet mart
The only solace he could claim
Was there 'mid reeking wrecks of fame.

So in self-exile, banish'd far
From every ray of Virtue's star,
From Hope's bright dream, and Joy's fond smile,
He, lingering, pass'd from Nature's guile
To Death's dark, solitary isle!

“Thy name is frailty!” Avon's bard,
In self-complacence, glibly sung,
When nuptial ties his life had marr'd
And o'er his spirit madness flung.
And many a harp, unkindly strung,
Has execrated Woman's name,
And poison'd, with malignant tongue,
The virgin beauty of her fame.
Oh, man, perfidious to life's trust!
Is this low imprecation just?
Does in thine own dark, sullen soul
One purer flow of virtue roll?
Has nature wrought within thy breast
Those charms of life the loveliest,—
Unchanging love, untiring care,
The first in deep distress to share,
The last to quit misfortune's side,
Tho' clouds of hate may there betide?
Has Heaven been more benignant still
To thee, O miscreant of dark will?

“Nay! nay!” is Justice’ high reply.

Then let thy truthless slanders die,

And seek no more to blast the fame

Of one so fair and pure of name.

And why should man thus execrate

A being so divinely fair?

When sooth her soul would fitter mate

With seraph in his lofty state

Than link with such as human are!

Is it that in an evil hour

She yielded to temptation’s power,

And of the Tree of Life partook?

This was to her great wisdom’s book;

And that her soul aspiring sought

To wing its flight ’mid godlike thought,

Could she be censured? Answer *thou*

Whose soul Ambition wakens now!

Invective man! the secret scroll

Of buried years awhile unroll,

And read, upon its varied page,

Her lofty deeds from age to age!

Behold as one, when mighty Rome

Lay trembling ’neath a threaten’d doom,

When, fierce with rage, in sheen of war,—

Revenge their only guiding star,—

A furious host exultant came,

Her walls to level with the dust,

To blast her comet-gleaming fame,

And sate in ruins their savage lust!

Their sanguine leader, tho' a son,
To that imperial city born,
Had sworn, within a desperate hour,
The wreck eternal of her power,
And that her glory bright should sink
Beyond Redemption's yawning brink !

And chafing hot with burning hate,
The' avenging minister of fate,
He now leads on that eager host—
Another hour, and Rome is lost !

But who is she who dares to brave
His fury, and the doom'd to save ?
'Tis she upon whose gentle breast
His young head first reclined to rest ;
His noble heart, tho' wild with rage,
A mother's prayers did quick assuage ;
And, tho' his life-blood was the cost,
He backward led that Volscian host !
And Rome, untouch'd, sublimely stood
To prove the power of Womanhood.

Contaminating man ! did she
Deluge the world in misery,
And on each far-extended shore
The crimson tide of battle pour ?
And then, when all the world, enslaved,
Beheld the conqueror's banner waved
Above their homes—say, did she weep
That there were no more worlds to sweep
With storms of war, and glory reap ?

'Tis history will the truth attest,
And prove the feeling of her breast.
'Twas ever hers, where lay the slain
Stretch'd bleeding on the purple plain,
To seek the fallen, friend or foe,
And mitigate his dying woe.

Perfidious man ! unfaithful found
When most is needed aid of thee,
When dark misfortunes hover round
The path of life unbrokenly,

'Tis then, alas ! too late, we know
The latent treachery of that breast,
Whose love we deem'd of human best

When blinded to its real flow.
In thee we often deem we see
The counterpart of Deity ;
But then, ere many months be sped,
Behold, the phantom bright is fled,
And all our fond delusion's dead !

When heaven's high King all bleeding hung
Upon the cross in agony ;

And sepulchres their doors unflung,
In terror, at man's mad decree ;
When earth, and all eternity,
In wild convulsions, mingled, sway'd,
And darkness, like a Stygian shade,
Enshrouded day with nightly veil,
'Twas then, when man's faint heart did fail,
That woman's breast, unterrified,
The bleeding Cross remain'd beside,

A ministering angel there,
His latest anguish still to share,
Till Deity had died !

Ungrateful man ! in sickness' hour,
When burning fever racks thy brain,
And dark contagion's penal power
Pervades thy form with ruthless pain,—
Say, dost thou in this hour disdain
That tender solace hers alone,
Refusing, with malignant frown,
Her fond solicitude and care,
Which 'tis thy fortune then to share ?

Let conscious shame her right declare,
And in the hour of ease remind
Thy soul, so ingrate and unkind,
That Justice will, or soon or late,
A retribution due create.

“The last best gift of Heaven,” such
The *loftiest* bard of time hath sung ;
For when his hand, with master-touch,
Awaked his harp to music strung,
It seem'd like Heaven-taught fingers flung
Across celestial dulcimers,
Holding spell-bound her worshipers.
And such high praise, in sooth, is due
To Womankind, the only true.

Tho' sometimes weakness mar her plan
And yield her to the wiles of man,
Yet why for this does he return
On her that condemnation stern ?

'Twas he who foil'd her hopes, and seal'd
Her doom, no more to be repeal'd.
Then say, O heartless human! say,
Dost thou condemn, and thus repay
The victim of thy selfish sway?

Ah! yes; and thus that hapless fate
Of Woman leaves her desolate,
Upon the bleak world thrown, as spray
Torn from its mother-wave away,
To wander wretched and alone
All hopelessly to life's sad bourn!

Scenes beautiful, and pleasures pure,
'Tis hers, alas! to know no more;
But sin and its allurements vain
Are all her soul can now attain!
The roseate dreams of youth's fond prime
Benighted by one fitful crime,
And halcyon hope, young love imparted,
Vanish'd, and she left broken-hearted!

This is, O venal man! thy deed,
Yet thy cold heart disdains to bleed;
And she, who once with face so fair,
With heart so pure, and charms so rare,
No more must claim from Pity's eye
The fleeting tribute of a sigh,
But, wrapp'd in Sorrow's silent gloom,
At length find refuge in the tomb!
Yet there she sleeps that same calm sleep

Which generous death imparts to all;
And, tho' but few above her weep,
For her the tears of angels fall!

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

LET beauteous Fame
The Poet's name
In immortality enshrine ;
And Freedom's tear
The Patriot's bier
Bedew with fervency divine ;
Or Glory come
In early bloom,
And crown with radiancy of light
The Warrior's brow,
While nations bow
And hail him warder of the right ;
But give to me,
O Memory !
That boon of beauty thine alone,
To fondly rest
In Friendship's breast,
To cold Forgetfulness unknown !



“MON AMI.”

TO ———.

MY heart has not lost its remembrance for thee,
Though oblivion has darken'd my name,
And with its deep gloom wrapp'd thy friendship for me,
Which forever I deem'd I might claim.

Ah ! no ; but just as it germ'd into life,
And bloom'd as a flower is blown,
So it through my bosom, with entity rife,
Was wreathed with thy image alone.

And the frost of forgetfulness never shall blight,
Or time sear its beauty and bloom :
But its fragrance shall rise with the freshness of night,
For thy name is its life and perfume.

How closely its tendrils were wreathed round my heart !
For the brightest affection it knew
Had lately been torn from its homage apart,
While its fondest expectancies flew,

Every dream of my boyhood, the dearest and best,
All the hopes of my youth which were dead !
Though anguish was mine when I laid them to rest,
It was frenzy when this one had fled !

And the heat, which the frenzy of grief can inspire,
 If lull'd not to sleep at its birth,
 Will canker the heart with its mad-breathing fire,
 Till existence is desert and dearth.

And thus in the depth of the urn of my heart
 This penal infection was lit ;
 But fate gave thy friendship, which temper'd its art,
 And Solitude's all that remains now of it ;

But a Solitude drear as the winter of years,
 When the snow and the tempest of time
 Have kill'd every flower which life most endears,
 And left it a bleak waste of crime.

Yet that bright "*Mon Ami,*" we chose as our star,
 A light o'er our pathways to shine,
 Will never be dimm'd in its gleaming afar,
 Till eclipsed by a ray more divine.

Ah ! thus shall it glow, though adversity frown,
 And blight, in its beauty so rare,
 Thy spirit, imbued with those graces alone
 Which the angels might envy to share.

And still, when that darkness which smothers all light
 Above my wild spirit shall wave,
Its ray shall be last to make radiant the night,
 And will scatter the gloom from the grave !

TO TOBY.*

POOR Toby, 'tis of thee I sing,
And thou art worthy of my song,
Though women darts of vengeance fling
At thy defenseless soul of wrong.

For words of thine their mortal wrath
Hangs over thy untutor'd head ;
And henceforth thou a dreary path
Through life must unattended tread.

O'er thy dark fate I sadly weep !
But I must shun thee now, for, oh,
The Calliope's ire o'er me shall sweep,
And lay me, like thee, cold and low !

Yet, hapless Toby, thou shalt have
My unfeign'd sympathy for e'er ;
Though I cannot redeem or save
Thy spirit from a fate so drear.

* This poem, and the one succeeding, are of local origin, and will be of interest only to the few to whom the circumstances of that origin are known.

Nor dare I vindicate thy cause ;
Yet I, and all who know thee well,
Would give to thee thy due applause
If maids would not 'gainst us rebel.

But then, you know, my dear old chum,
That when a reputation's lost—
At least with women—keeping dumb
Is best for man at any cost.

No one can tell how sad I feel
In losing such a friend as thou ;
But, that I may maintain my weal
With Woman, I renounce thee now !

Thou from thy lofty eminence,
Like Lucifer, hast fallen low ;
And thou consign'd, like him, from hence,
Must be to an eternal woe !

O proud and peerless Toby, thou
No more shalt blaze in splendor bright,
Thy star of glory glimmers now
In gloom beyond the gloom of night.

Its rays our eyes no more shall ken :
Then weep, oh, weep thy dismal doom !
Thy greatness ne'er shall rise again,
Or shed o'er maiden hearts its bloom.

So to thy greatness bid farewell,
A long farewell ! like Wolsey did ;

But hast thou none like him to tell
Of how thy fame so soon was hid?

Oh, if thou hast, then, Toby, warn
This friend of thine, nor let him sink,
Like thee, beyond Redemption's dawn,
Where Woman stands upon the brink!

OCTOBER, 1870.



AN IMPROMPTU ESSAY.

ON A MONTHLY REVIEW OF WACO UNIVERSITY.

THE day of our monthly Review is at hand,
And most of the students are gather'd around,
While our honor'd professors, with ready command,
Make the heart of each stripling with terror to bound.

The morning is past, and the evening is come;
And now on the rostrum young speakers appear,
With bosoms elated; with eloquence some
Put their elders to shame that they lag in the rear.

The editors, too, of our Society's Review,
Or the Phyloglomies' paper, as others,
With envious feelings, have term'd it too true,
Now come to put forth their utmost endeavors!

Yes, 'tis true their utmost endeavors must rise;
For folly and meagreness only appear—
Its pages are blotted, yet, under disguise
Of bombast and pomp, what has it to fear?

It goes on the saw, "You must blow your own horn,"
And spout through the world, or forever you sink;
And he who does not was undoubtedly born
At the fount of Forgetfulness ever to drink!

But why is it thus? Alas! who can tell?

For surely its precepts are highly ill-bred;
Can you not, fair ladies, this doubting dispel?

“Yes,” one gladly whispers, “your Toby is dead!”

But where is young Grey? Can no one account

For his sudden departure from duty?

“Yes,” another replies: “his lyrical fount

Is pouring its libations only to beauty!”

But now for a partial inspection from home—

The fair Prairie-flower its perfumes exhale,
Like ambrosial odors from Olympian dome,

And its music floats soft on the wings of the gale.

But, ho! where’s the Basket? Oh, marvelous sight!

Have its chips been consumed by a merciless fire?

Ah! yes; for its ashes lie smoulder’d and white,

And no *mark* tells the tale so disastrously dire!

’Tis whisper’d around (but can it be true?)

That its contents were furnish’d as fuel

To make a warm beverage for the partial few

Who consume the collegiate lunch of the school.

But be this for fiction or be it for truth,

It is not exactly our province to say:

We only can tell that full many a youth

Deeply grieves that the Basket has been borne away,

Yet we hope it will shortly return to the stage,

And in this great drama act fairly its part,

And like Phoenix ’twill rise, this we gladly presage:

Then, sorrowing youth, calm thy turbulent heart!

BELSHAZZAR.

THE big, broad sun had sunk to rest
In the lap of the distant deep;
A crimson moon, in the arms of night,
Smiled on a world embalm'd in sleep;
The air was calm as an infant's dream,
And myriad stars gleam'd on the earth,
When, from the east, in rapturous tones,
Waked the voluptuous sounds of mirth.

It was a feast! a royal feast!
The mighty king Belshazzar's last!—
Who, proudly there array'd, unthought
The awful crisis gathering fast.
Now satraps brave and women fair
Upon each other fondly smiled;
With hopes elate their souls o'erflow'd,
And hearts with love throb'd high and wild.

The strains of music now begin—
It is a glorious night to all!
And feet fantastic lightly trip
Along that grandly lighted hall;
And on they go; with flying feet
They chase the halcyon hours away,

Unmindful of the dismal fate
That must arise ere dawn of day.

Without the city 's gather'd now
The Persian and the haughty Mede :
O royal king, thy country's doom'd !
This is Jehovah's awful creed.
But, heedless still, sweet laughter ring
Upon the purple-pinion'd air,
And flowing bowls, from sacred shrines,
Too, give ungodly pleasure there.

But, hark ! a deadly sound breaks in,
Deep fraught with swellings of despair ;
And, lo ! the scintillations gleam
Amid the gloom, with hectic flare ;
And fast the mirthful voices die
In echoes thro' the vault above,
While lamentations fill the night,
A requiem to late living love !

And every face, that rosy blush'd
A moment since, is ghastly pale ;
And on his gorgeous golden throne
Even this august king doth quail.
The strains of music, too, are hush'd—
Dread silence reigns, that doth appall
The bravest heart ; and now a hand,
All ghostly, writes along the wall

In language strange and mystic, dark !
“ Ah ! what does that mad hand portray ?”

Now frantic cries the trembling king,—

“Is there not one, e’en one, to say,
Among ye sages, learn’d and great,
What this portends?” No answers come!
But men of lore in horror gaze,
While every soul’s with terror dumb!

“Bring me the Hebrew captive, then!”

The monarch in his madness cries,
And forth Jehovah’s Prophet comes,
To tell the haughty king—he dies!
“Round thy neck a golden chain,
Emblem of thy high command,
Thou shalt wear, and in my kingdom
Third in honor thou shalt stand,

“If to me the latent language
Of this writing thou shalt speak;—
Hear, O captive! do my bidding,
And this spell of terror break!”
But he answer’d, “Proud Belshazzar!
What are all these things to me?
Or to thee? for ere the morning
Thou in death shalt sleeping be.

“God hath weigh’d thee in his balance,
And thou hast been wanting found!
This, O monarch! is the writing—
Hear ye not the conflict’s sound?”
Thus he ended, and the foemen
Now were in the city’s wall,

And, by sword of Mede and Persian,
Bravest sons of Chaldea fall !

And the battle rages fiercer—
King Belshazzar meets the host ;
But ere morn had brightly risen,
He was number'd with the lost ;
And the broad Euphrates river,
Rolling high and wildly on,
Moan'd a sad and plaintive requiem
For the spirits that had flown !



LINES WRITTEN ON LEAVING WACO UNIVERSITY.

A DIEU to the place where the halcyon hours
Of waning boyhood and the morning of youth
Were pass'd amid pleasures enamel'd with flowers,
Embalm'd by the dews from the streamlet of truth.

From this height, which so long as sacred I held,
I see the fair village before me arise;
Here oft have I sat, and, with rapture, beheld
The broad sun in glory depart from the skies.

Here oft, when the young Night rejoiced in his birth,
I have watch'd the mild moon on his bosom recline
And with languishing glow kiss the envious Earth;
But that rapture, alas! no more can be mine.

Yet a tenderer tie binds me closer to thee,
Thou dear spot! for here Meditation first taught
My young soul that happiness only can be
In Solitude such as thy presence hath brought.

I have been with thee long, and many an eve
Hath smiled on our converse, in silence prolong'd;
The language of truth did thy lips only weave,
While others, obsequious, my bosom have wrong'd.

Yes, others whom faith had impell'd me to love
And lay at their mercy my heart's sondest thought;
But, ah! did they true to that confidence prove?
Time, the tell-tale, a different lesson has taught!

But pause in thy flight, O Remembrance unkind,
And mark for awhile a more generous scene;
A beacon of glory, to harbor the mind,
Now breaks on the view with a grandeur serene.

'Tis the walls of a college, majestic to see;
A place which my heart must forever revere!
A sedulous nurse it has long been to me,
And I bid it farewell with the breath of a tear.

Some hours most hallow'd beneath its broad roof,
Which echoed the language and laughter of joy,
I spent; but suspicion has turn'd me aloof,
And my heart wakes no feeling like that when a boy.

But avault, recollections that mirror the past
With a form like the ghosts of the Stygian shore!
For the shade of a scene more beguiling is cast
On life's panorama now passing before.

In the freshness of girlhood she dawns on the view,
Like a dream which portrays the' empyrean clime;
With ringlets of ebon which winds love to woo,
And a voice which doth rival the lute in its chime.

'Twas she who did teach my young soul to adore,
And low at the shrine of Affection to bow;

To offer to her the first-fruits of its core,
And to garland with flowers of love her fair brow.

Her smile, like the sunbeam when morning is fair,
Germ'd a hope in my breast, which flourish'd beneath
The dew of her kindness; but that Whisper was there
Which on its dark wings bears th' infection of death.

So I must depart, for to linger would be
A torture which mortal would brook not to brave :
Then, star of my boyhood, to hope and to thee
A final farewell echoes all that it gave.

Farewell ! but when spring of existence is gone,
And summer hath twined thee her laurel of joy,
Should autumn bring grief to thy bosom alone,
May Heaven, benignant in mercy, deploy !

But now let me gaze on the picture once more :
It is lovely, yet tinged is its sequel with woe !
I go, yet there's not in the wide world a shore,
Tho' sunny as Eden, like to this in its glow.

Happy place ! where memories, divine in their sheen,
Shed effulgence as soft as the azure of heaven.
I grieve that I leave thee ; but what thou hast been
Thou art not ; and as bliss, thou hast anguish, too, given.

So let me this hour in silence depart,
Nor recall to remembrance those sorrows so deep ;
But let them live on in the core of my heart,
A watch o'er the tomb where its dead idols sleep !

80 *ON LEAVING WACO UNIVERSITY.*

And they shall an aliment be to my soul,
 To nurture vitality's entity there;
And when darkness and death round existence shall roll,
 I shall last think of thee, my hope and despair!

FEB. 1871.



THE ANATHEMA OF LIFE.

“Lost—lost—lost!

To me, forever, the seat near the blood of the feast.

To me, forever, the Station near the Throne of Love!

To me, forever, the Kingdom of Heaven—and I the least.”

MENKEN.

MY Soul is wild with anguish!

And, like a caged bird awaked to the memory of its airy liberty, my Spirit, beacon'd by the “pride of place” in the far-off eyrie of bliss,* still beats its weary pinions against the iron bars of wretchedness,—staining its fair young plumage with the crimson tide of life.

In aspiration for that Bliss of Life it has grown mad; and yet will not be stay'd in its wild flight!

Oh, when shall rest be mine?

Oh, when shall some kind Angel, watching long the seal of wretchedness upon my life, stay, with her magic touch, its goading usurpation?

My Spirit faints with longing to be free—to flit beyond the dimness of the world's bleak bourn, and bathe its weary pinions in the Sea of Song!

Fainting for Freedom!

Dying in Darkness!

* “An eagle towering in his pride of place.”—*Macbeth*.

“In pride of place here last the eagle flew.”—*Childe Harold*.

Oh, when shall be ended this Sorrow of Soul?

It was not always thus!

My Spirit did not always feel the pang of unremitting Pain stinging it to its core, and pointing, as it laughed, to the phantom Tablet of the Great To-Come, whereon is written Death, and saying, "Spirit of Sin, behold thy Doom!"

Ah, no! it was not always thus!

There was a Time—Ah! why did Destiny envy her life with me, and bear her, fetter'd with grief, the Bride of the Sable Past?

Fair, fairy Time! when round my brow was garlanded the rainbow of happy Hope; when in the core of my young heart was brightly written Purity and Peace, and every thought and dream was Love!

But the day of Dreams, so fraught with Hope, and Peace, and Love, lingers no longer!

The deep, dark shadows of Sin, and Sorrow, and Despair, have stolen across its dawn, and left it in the Erebus of Gloom!

My Spirit pants for light!

Light to awake dead Hope!

Light to dispel its gloom!

Light to give back its Joy!

The Joy of its distant day!

And yet no light doth come!

Oh, thou lost Pleiad of my Soul, come back to me!

But no, she's gone—gone—gone!

And ever, with demoniac laugh, cometh the Fiend of Pain, and, pointing to the phantom Tablet of the Great To-Come, whereon is written Death, sayeth, "Spirit of Sin, behold thy Doom!"

Oh, curséd Vision !

How prays my Spirit to be freed from its ghostly gaze,
—to hear no more its hollow voice of Doom !

But it will not depart !

It haunts me still ; and when I sleep, it is my dream—
my only dream.

My Spirit seems loosed from its mortal ossuary, and
plumed with Immortality !

Then, mounted on the Tempest of Eternity, before me
flies the Spirit of my early years !

Her eyes are wild with ghastly tears,—her once fair
hair is clotted black with blood ; and, as the Tempest, in
his rage, bears her along the Course of Death, her voice
in frenzy cries :

“Oh, thou mad Suicide of Life ! Why hast thou
come ?

“To dwell without thee were enough of woe !

“But hence forever to behold the form that, with the
Scimitar of Sin, spilt my young life-blood and made it
food for worms, surpasseth far the Second Death !

“Avaunt thee, then, I pray thee, and forbear !”

But, ah ! her prayer is vain.

My fratricide Soul cleaves unto hers, and down—
down—indissoluble now, they sink,—oh, God ! they die !

I wake in terror !

But this visionary woe requites not fate ;

For unto my wakefulness cometh this Fiend of Pain,
and, pointing to the phantom Tablet of the Great To-
Come, whereon is written Death, sayeth, “Spirit of Sin,
behold thy Doom !”

Oh, God ! and shall this Vision never die ?

Shall not this Corse of Conscience slumber yet, and
cease to bathe my spirit's lips in gall and wormwood,—
bitter unto death?

When will some pitying Angel plead for me?

When will thy Mercy melt, and into my arid Soul
pour the sweet oil of Forgiveness?

“Never, oh, never!” sayeth this hollow Voice.

“Never, oh, never!” my Spirit cries—

“Never, oh, never!”

I hear an echo dark arise

From across Death's river!

And my soul is wild with sorrow,

Ever, forever;

For to me there cometh no Morrow—

Never, oh, never!

APRIL, 1872.



TO SUSIE.

SWEET ebon-eyed maid, of my boyhood the light,
Long years have departed since, clasping thy hand,
I felt the fast throb of the pulse of delight
Thrill my breast with that joy which but thou couldst
command;
Yet still doth my bosom, unchanged and unfree,
With that passion awake which it first woke for thee.

But perchance thy young heart hath echoed and lost
The sound of that voice once so happily heard;
And the image of him then delighting the most
Hath gone from thee now like an echoless word;
Yet, though wrapp'd in oblivion my memory may be,
Still love in my bosom is sparkling for thee.

Ah! when that dread hour, which sever'd thy smile
From the smile of reflection then equally mine,
Had come, all my soul was embitter'd the while;
And I wept that was lost such a rapture divine!
And never a thought could be nurtured by me
Unless, in its joy, it reverted to thee.

And when thou wert gone, by that soft flowing stream
Where first our young hearts waked the passion of love,

Each morning, as erst, with its bright rising beam,
Found me wandering there, its enchantments to prove;
But chill'd were its pleasures, and lonely to see;
For the light of their joys had departed with thee!

Yet perchance in that day some hoar-headed sage,
Beholding affection thus fresh in its bloom,
Sigh'd to think that the fast-fleeting footsteps of age
Would leave e'en its memory enshrouded in gloom;
But he knew not, alas! that, like pearls in the sea,
This jewel of passion was thus hid for thee.

Thou wert my first love, thou my last shalt remain;
As that star which earliest at evening is seen,
And latest when morn treads the soft azure plain,
So thou art to me, and hast yet ever been!
And no change which the fiat of Fate may decree
Can alter this breast, which alone throbs for thee



THE FLOWER.

ACCEPT from me this little flower;
It is a token of my love;
And may it, in some future hour,
Thy heart of me in mem'ry move.

And may that recollection bring
No pang to that soft heart of thine;
But may some sweet enchantment cling
Around it, like a spell divine.



THE LOVERS' LEAP.

A TRADITIONAL TALE OF TEXAS.

I.

THE morn, in blushing beauty, broke
Along the azure orient sky,
When many a fearless warrior woke,
From dreams of love, to battle's cry.
And swift to arms they fly, they fly;
While every mountain, dale, and hill
The' alarming echoes answer shrill;
For o'er the far-extended plain
The chief Sammaccus comes in vain
With serried host, in martial train,
His mortal hate in blood to quell.
And youthful Alva proud doth ride,
His aged sire, the chief, beside,
Elated high with hope and pride,
Which even now of glory tell.
And to the wildly amorous air
Is streaming now his ebon hair,
As if it felt a conscious glow
Of glory through it come and go.
And in the deadly sheen of war
His form conspicuous shines afar,
As some tremendous meteor

Along the coruscated sky
When tempest moves in grandeur by.

II.

But, hark ! the Shasta chieftain's voice
Is ringing sonorous on the air ;
And savage warriors, who rejoice
In din of arms, are gathering there ;
And each, with vengeance fierce, will dare
To meet thee, Alva, and thy sire,
To-day, where hottest burns the fire
Of war, and where the bravest lay
A victim to death's sable sway.

III.

In grim array each phalanx forms,
And, with undaunted steps and slow,
They now advance with eager arms,
To lay, unwept, each other low.
But, hark ! that cry—now on they go ;
And on the plain impetuous meet—
With clash of shield and spear they greet
Each other—death in every blow !
And, lo ! the Shasta warriors fly—
But no ; they back return, and now,
With fiercer strength, with darker brow,
With fury glaring in each eye,
They meet again ; and arm on arm
Is clashing with a mad alarm.
Full many a gallant hero falls
Beneath each blow ; but still the calls

To victory and to death awake
New courage thro' the ranks that break.
And now, with mightier onslaught still,
The wavering come, and madly fill
With dead and dying, friend and foe,
Promiscuous, all the plain below.

IV.

Lo ! flying to yon forest fast,
A gallant steed, from battle's blast,
All riderless, is hurrying on ;
And blood and sweat profusely flow
Adown his hotly panting side,
By tomahawk or falchion torn,
In hands of some relentless foe ;
But burning breath his nostrils wide
Distend with yet unconquer'd pride.
And whose proud steed leaves rider low,
A hapless prey to savage foe ?
And who the rider left to share
Alone the furious tumult there ?
'Tis Alva ; still his gallant form,
Undaunted, stems the battle's storm.
Though faint and bleeding, still he calls
For vengeance ; and before him falls
The bravest of the daring van
That form his foe's unconquer'd clan.
Still, on they come, like ghosts of night,
And back recoils the tide of fight ;
For Alva's voice is heard in vain
To swell the blast along the plain—

His bravest are among the slain—
His dastard few in flight.

V.

But dauntless Alva was not doom'd
To die defeated by a foe,
Or where the star of victory 'lumed
Above the forms that laid him low.
Not thus, but as a captive now
They bore him bound from battle-ground;
Yet still upon that nitid brow
The same unsullied pride was found,
And in his darkly-gleaming eye,
As stars that light the Boreal sky,
The fire of vengeance still was red,
Nor died when every hope was dead.

VI

The moon is up; and on the plain
She slowly turns her tearless eye,
To view the hapless heroes, slain
While chafed the tide of battle high.
And loth she seems to climb the sky;
For no propitious passing cloud
Appears, her pallid face to shroud,
But still, with blood-red glare, she pours
Her beams upon the silent shores,
Where murmuring waves a requiem moan
For hero spirits lately flown.
But turning now her ghastly ray
Among the groves where, slumbering, lay

The victor warriors lost to life
In dreams of visionary strife,
She marks a scene which breaks the spell
That lately o'er her spirit fell
With gory magic, while she view'd
The plain with mangled corpses strew'd.

For 'mong that mighty slumbering host
One form alone to sleep is lost ;
And this, the Shasta chieftain's child,
Around whom maiden beauty smiled.
She saw the captive ; and a wild,
Impetuous passion sway'd her breast,
And madly robb'd it of its rest.

Scarce seventeen summers' suns had play'd
Around the form of this bright maid ;
And every charm the Graces claim'd,
As is of fair Iole* famed,
Around her smiled, like stars that gleam
At midnight on a crystal stream.
And as the plumage of that bird
Whose "Nevermore" no more is heard
Save in the deeps with Ulalume,
So were her tresses in their gloom.
With eyes empyrean as the ray
Which lights the orient into day,
She well might claim the homage high
Of many a warrior's heart and eye.
Ah, this is bright Mulita ! she
Whose kindly glance and voice shall be

* The wife of Hercules. See Plutarch.

To Alva, in this hour of pain,
A hope, though but a hope in vain.

VII.

She sleeps not, but through tears she views
The rising moon, and her she woos,
As if she sought the queen of night
To shield her treacherous heart from blight,
And guide her where her hero lay,
That she might charm his night to day.

Now, rising softly 'neath the glare
Of that wild moon, she ventures where
The fetter'd captive bleeding lies,
And, with a whisper, thus she sighs :

“Unhappy stranger! though a foe
To sire and kindred, and to me,

Yet still I come to check the flow
Of blood and sorrow, and to be
(If I the boon may grant to thee)
A traitor to my cause and kin,
And let thee, foeman, freedom win:
For when the morning dawns, they'll come—”

But here she falter'd, as if some
Unkindly evil, or his doom,
Hung on the words which sobs repress
And held unutter'd in her breast.

“Oh, maiden, speak!” then Alva cried,
“Nor try the worst from me to hide,
Well know I what my doom shall be,
Unless I find an aid in thee.

Then speak, oh, speak!" again he cried.
And thus Mulita soft replied:

"To-morrow they will come, and thou
Must to the cruel victor bow,—
A prey to death,—while I alone
Shall weep thee, gallant warrior, gone!"

Thus ended she; and forth she drew
A glittering steel, to rend in two
The cords which bound each weltering limb;
For, oh, thus burn'd her love for him!

"Stay, maiden, stay the hasty knife!
For why risk thine to save my life?
What! knowest thou not what deadly ire
Awakes, with unabating fire,
Within the bosom of thy sire,
For me and mine? Then leave my side,
And as full many a brave has died,
So let me die!" But, "No! oh, no!"
The maiden sobb'd; "I will not go.
To leave thee here alone, alone,—
To see thee die,—to know thee gone,
Forever gone, would bring to me
A deeper woe than die with thee!"

"What feeling hath inspired thy breast,
To make thee rob thyself of rest?
To pour above thy sunny path
A sire's displeasure—a sire's wrath?
For what if thou my freedom gave,
And snatch'd me from untimely grave,—
Wouldst thou my future years make bright
With smiles and love, and be the light

To lure me, with unfading flame,
High o'er the darkling steep of fame?
Wilt thou this do? Oh, quickly speak!
For see! yon slumbering warriors wake."

"I will!" With this the cords she rent;
But, ah! too late the bright intent;
For loud and long the' alarming cry
Upon the night-air echoed by.
And trembling now Mulita stood—
Not for herself; for unsubdued
Was still that passion held in vain;
But for her lover, whom she fain
Would set at liberty again.

Yet this bright boon was not for her,
Who e'en in grief shone lovelier;
For now around in madness pour'd
The fiercest of that savage horde,
And from proud Alva's fearless side
They bore Mulita bound away,
Which wrung with ire that heart of pride,
That loathed before a foe to sway.

But what is vengeance now to him,
When many a warrior, fierce and grim,
Amid that mad vindictive band,
Would joy to tear from out his breast
The bounding heart, and feel at rest
While dropp'd his life-blood from the hand?
So fetter'd once again he lay,
To meet his doom at coming day.

"That doom," he sigh'd, "which must destroy
That hope which, from a sportive boy,

Has wildly revel'd in my breast,
And never yet has calm'd to rest,—
To seek, where only fame is found,
The bloodiest spot on battle-ground,
And learn to love its mingled sound.
But how, alas, has fate o'erspread
With darkness all that hope had said
Should crown the manly brow of years,
And make me first among my peers!

I go! and not a bard will sing
My glory as their bravest king,
Or teach young chiefs the way to fame
By memory of my deathless name;
And not an eye shall mark the spot
Where unto dust my ashes rot,
And say, 'Our chieftain sleepeth here!'
Nor shed in homage there one tear.
But I shall pass from earth away,—
The exhalation of a day!"

Thus spake Ambition! but from one
Whose heart no Christian throb had known.
He knew the glory of his race,
And sigh'd to win its loftiest place;
A second Etsel,* with his scourge,
He raged to stem the battle's surge.

VIII.

The morn at length begins to break,
In heavy clouds, along the sky,

* Attila.

And vengeful Shasta warriors wake
To view the chieftain doom'd to die.
Yet in his ever-brilliant eye
The same unsullied glory gleams,
As if his night were fill'd with dreams,
With many a happy vision fraught;
Nor deigns he to portray the thought
Which inward racks his wreaking breast;
But smiling on—with grief repress—
He scorns his foes' puissant power,
And calmly waits the fatal hour.

Hark! hear that whoop, which, like a knell,
Resounds along the echoing dell!
'Tis finish'd, and the hour is come—
But shall young Alva meet his doom?

The sturdy tread of gathering host,
Prophetic, speaks that all is lost!
And from his tightly fettering thrall
They loose the captive, and the call
To march funereal wakes, with deep
And solemn sound, each neighboring steep.

And on the heart of her who sought,
At midnight dread, the hero's side,

The footsteps fall like requiems caught
From depths where every hope has died.
Still on they move, and she alone
Is left to weep the captive gone,
And in the distance faintly breaks
The echo which that tread awakes.
But now they pause, and every eye
Turns on the victim doom'd to die.

Low kneeling at a marksman's pace,
He views, with still unchanging face,
The archers formidable and fell——

But, hark ! a wildly furious yell
The forest wakes with fierce alarms ;
And once again the clash of arms
Is heard, with hideous din and roar,
To clang along the dusky shore.
And gallant Alva, freed once more,
War's howling tempest stems again,
As when upon that purple plain ;
And old Sammaccus—glorious chief—
Comes forth with all the mad relief

Of battle, and before him fly,
The Shasta warriors, but in vain ;
For never yet on field or plain
Lay dying more unhappy slain ;

But better thus than thou to die,
Brave Alva, who hast never known
A peer where gleam of conflict shone.
And now defeat and ruinous rout—
The victor's wild triumphant shout
Fresh tumults wake along the dell,
Loud, deep, and sonorous in their swell.
And on they speed, by Alva led ;
They leave the dying and the dead
To welter in the gory glade
Where late their mangled forms were laid.

Yet still amid the conflict wild
A radiant star o'er Alva smiled,

And lent new courage to his breast
When foes more madly round him prest.
For her he sought, and would not stay
His reeking blade amid the fray;
But where a barrier stood, he came,
And mortal was each vengeful aim.
At length upon his wistful gaze
A lovely light is seen to blaze!
“’Tis she!” with eagerness he cries;
“’Tis she!” the distant vale replies;
And yes, ’tis she, but all in vain;
For strength and speed his might disdain.
A stately form her frail one bears,
And now the raging torrent dares;
And from the shore a light canoe
Glides swiftly o’er the waters blue.
And hopeless now, with turbid soul,
He sees it through the distance roll;
For no propitious bark is near
To lend its aid, or him to steer.

IX.

It is of night the mellow noon!
And now, like splendid dreams, doth glide
Along the sky the yellow moon,
In maiden beauty and in pride;
And not a cloud, in all the wide
Expanse of heaven, is seen to float,
Her clear and crimson glow to hide;
But, like a fairy realm remote,
Bestud with starry gems of light,

in liquid blue, the happy night
Sways beautiful and bright.

X.

“One moon has waned away, and, lo !
Another sheds a ripen'd glow
Upon this naiad-haunted stream,
And mirrors there her flecker'd beam ;
And I have wander'd long and lone
In search of her—that dark-eyed one—
Who sought, at midnight hour, my side,
And all the hate of kith defied,
That I might freedom win, and she
The bride of bleeding Alva be ;
Nor yet on mountain or in plain
Her lovely form is seen again ;
Nor comes she with the ghosts of night
To bid me follow where her sprite
Has gone to reign, a queen of light !
But, weary, hopeless, and alone,
I search for her—that dark-eyed one.”

Thus to the moon did Alva wail,
And plaintive speak his hapless tale.
But not an answer comes to him
From out the sky where moonbeams swim ;
Or from beneath, where, dark and grim,
A yawning cavern drinks the flood
Of that bright stream, as though 'twere blood.
But all alone, in silence now,
He views the waters, or the brow

Of hoary cliffs which tower above,
As if to guard their sportive love.

XI.

“Alva! my love—my warrior!” fell
Upon the air a charm—a spell!
He turn’d, and, lo! before him stood
The loveliest form of womanhood.
Enraptured, wilder’d, then he cried,
“Mulita! is it thou, my bride?”
“It is!” and forth to her he sprang,
And gone was every bleeding pang.
His heart was wild with love and bliss!
He had no dream of night like this—
The warm embrace—the honey’d kiss!
“Mulita! thou to me hast been,
Since first thy lovely form was seen,
More than the wildest flare of fame
Which in my soul had lit its flame,
And lured me, with its fiery light,
To stand the first on battle’s height,
And win a crown of glory there,
Which none have worn, or yet shall wear.
And since that day, in brisky bark,
I saw thee borne o’er waters dark,
My only thought hath been to prove
The loveliness of that deep love,
The all-absorbing hope of life,
To give it joy, or calm its strife;
And thou art here!” He could no more,
But closer press’d her to his heart,

Which, bounding to its very core,
Found words too weak its love to pour,
Or its delight impart.

XII.

“From that blest morn which made thee free,
This lovely world hath been to me
A world of sorrow! Not a smile
Has cheer'd my drooping soul the while;
But scoffs, and jeers, and looks of ire
E'en from a once devoted sire,
Have left existence dark and bleak,
And paled the crimson on my cheek.
And this is why at length they came
And loosed me from my bonds of shame.
But health was gone, and strength had flown,
And animation's vital glow
Had ceased to tinge that cheek which shone,
In happier days, with smiles alone,
But there was left the marks of woe!
This now bright moon was then in birth
A cherub infant to the earth.
And in my lonely solitude
I watch'd her grow to maidenhood.
And oft in silence, when the gloom
Of night came stealing from the tomb
Of our dead Past, I pray'd that she
Would give me back to hope and thee,
Or grant me that eternal rest
In the hunting-ground of the blest.

And while I thus in suppliance lay,
A beauteous form, in bright array,
Came stealing through the ghostly glare
Which shade and moonlight painted there.
Then, with sweet voice, to me she said,
'Maiden, with soul to sorrow wed,
I long have watch'd thy silent woe,
And now have come to check its flow.
I was a maiden once like thee,
Of beauty full and sorrow free;
And in the love of him whose form
With passion all my soul did warm,
As thou, was blest! But on a day
When hope was brightest, grim affray,
Like demon ghosts through tempests, came,
And bade him win an early fame.
He plunged into the conflict wild—
He fell—I sought his side—he smiled,
And told his love, then died! Oh, how
My happy heart was broken now!
I thought to strike the fatal knife
Into my breast, and murder life;
But then I could not break the tie
Of self-existence thus, and die;
For that were weakness; and my heart,
Wild with revenge, began to start!
I donn'd his armor; and, his spear
Raising aloft, defiance bade to fear.

I knew his murderer, and all day
I sought him in that bloody fray.

We met—we fought—he fell ! but I,
Alas ! was not yet doom'd to die ;
Though prodigal of blood and life,
Untouch'd I pass'd amid that strife.
Nor did I die till months of woe
Drank up the life-blood ebbing slow ;
And then he came, and took me where
Immortal bliss with him I share.

So knowing what thy heart has known,
Behold, I come thy life to crown
With one bright hour of mortal bliss—
Then follow me ! 'Tis done, and this
Is what her kind compassion brought :
Thee and thy love, with every rapture fraught."

XIII.

" ' But one bright hour of mortal bliss' !
Oh, what mysterious doom is this ?
Shall we in one short hour dis sever,
And all our joys be flown forever ?"
He quick inquiry made. Then she,
" Ah ! no ; what did I say should be ?"
" But one bright hour to me and thee !"
" Ah ! yes ; and thus the spirit said,
But yet I reck not what to dread !"

Scarce had this strange foreboding been
Bespoke by her, his bride and queen,
When on the night a savage yell
Was heard, like notes of death, to swell.
" They come ! they come ! thy sire's mad race
Must sever'd be this dear embrace ?"

"No! no!" Mulita wildly cried—

"Then be it so!" he swift replied.

One more fond kiss of love is theirs,
One more embrace; and life's dark cares
Are over with. The brink is past,
And they in death are sleeping fast.

I.

The Bards of Song, for many a year,
Beside that stream at even,
When bright the moon, in leafy June,
Shone from the heights of heaven,
To brave young chiefs sang still of them,
And told their tale of sorrow,
Till e'en the strain is heard again
In this succeeding morrow.

II.

And still upon that bank are seen,
At eve, a youth and maiden,
Watching the gleam upon the stream,
And singing a song of Aiden.
And when the noon of night is come,
They gaze on the moon with sorrow,
Then plunge beneath to the depths of death,
To wait the coming morrow.

III.

And still is this a hallow'd place—
The trysting-place of lovers,

Who come at eve, and sadly grieve
To the moon that o'er them hovers.
They tell to the ear of night their tale,
With amatory sorrow ;
But the sprite which stray'd to the Indian maid
Comes not to them on the morrow.

APRIL, 1871.



A DREAM.

TO A YOUNG LADY OF GENIUS.

WHEN the day's gleaming splendor fades over the deep,
And night walks the starry-paved plain,
Enveloping earth in nepenthean sleep,
And freeing each spirit of pain,
'Tis then that the beautiful goddess of dreams
Diffuses her mystical charms;
And, oh, if our life e'er delectable seems,
'Tis then as we lie in her arms!

Last night, as the Lethean magic of sleep
O'er my faint, weary senses was thrown,
Like a bright rising star in the distance, the car
Of this lady came hurrying on;
And each dapple-dight steed, with impetuous speed,
Sped bright through the firmament blue,
Till I heard e'en the beat of their soft tinkling feet,
So near to my pillow they drew.

Then they paused in their flight, when, with beauty
bedight,
This goddess, so witchingly fair,
Alighted, and, lo! to my spirit she call'd,
And my spirit, enchanted, was there.

And swift in her car were this lady and I,
And then, at the wave of her wand,
Each dapple-dight steed, with impetuous speed,
Sped far o'er earth's shimmering strand.

And onward they flew, as the fleet-footed hours,
Through Elysian realms unknown,
O'er crystalline streams pellucid with gleams
As bright as affection e'er shone.
And still onward afar this magical car,
With its magical mistress, moved bright;
And the rapture then mine 'tis not man's to divine,
Nor his in such bliss to delight!

E'en all that is fair to the vision, or rare,
With the lustre of loveliness dight,
Came dazzling to view in each glittering sphere,
Like stars on the forehead of Night.
Yet amid each rich scene which my spirit did ken,
The rarest and fairest of all
Was that which the last moment witchingly cast
On my vision, and this I recall:

Methought that afar this magical car
Had sped till it paused on the brow
Of a mountain so high that the lips of the sky
Softly kiss'd its rough cheek, nor did bow.
Then eastward I turn'd, and the morning, unurn'd,
From his wave-cover'd couch did arise;
And the brightness he bore then was never before,
And will ne'er be again, I surmise.

Then my vision did change ; and how wilderly strange
Was a scene at the foot of that mount !
There, slumbering, it seem'd, was a maiden that dream'd,
As she lay by a glittering fount.
And a being more fair than the maid lying there
Was never a mortal's to see ;
And so pensive and bright was her brow that the sight
Fill'd with rapture this lady and me.

Then we heard on the air a symphony rare,
That with music demulcently rung,
Like an echoing note from that region remote
Where Israfel sweetly hath sung.
And the beings which swept those dulcimers rare,
And pour'd forth such music divine,
To our visions now came, like the Pleiads aflame ;
For with morning their lustre did shine.

And nearer to where lay the slumbering fair,
This bright apparition, with song
And music and dance, did swiftly advance,
Yet I fear'd for the sleeper no wrong ;
For so lovely a queen that phantom band led
That I deem'd her the goddess of Aiden ;
But this lady with me call'd her *Virtue*, and said,
“ She is loved by your beautiful maiden.

“ And now to repay that devotion so pure
She comes, like a meteor bright,
With her glittering train, from yon sainted domain
Where seraphs seem stars in their flight.”

She paused, and, behold ! round the form of this maid,
Now lost in delirium of sleep,
This rare apparition, in beauty array'd,
Gather'd fast, as if watch there to keep.

Then the silence was broke by that opulent queen,
As her eyes turn'd on one of that throng,
Who himself seem'd a god, so bedight was his sheen ;
And these were the words of her song :
“ This is she ! then I pray that thy sceptre be hers,
Since thou wilt its power resign ;
For her bosom is rife with each virtue of life,
And her soul even now is divine ! ”

“ Then 'tis hers,” said the god, as he knelt on the sod
By her so composedly sleeping ;
And he placed in her hand his magical wand,
And said, “ She is worthy its keeping.”
And as now he arose did the mystery disclose :
That god who had plighted this vow
Was Genius' bright self, and the maiden so blest—
The maiden so happy—wert *thou* !



TO — —

ON RECEIVING HER PICTURE.

THERE is a soft and magic wile
E'en in the semblance of thy charms;
And though bereft of that sweet smile,
It still my bosom thrills and warms.

Its hues are faint, and ill bespeak
The rosy living tints that start
To view in features which they seek
To imitate by mortal art.

Yet even here I still may trace
Full many a beauty wild and deep,—
Full many a partial nymphic grace,
Which but in thee their being keep.

That tender look, so soft and pure,
That only beams from eyes like thine,
Were there no other charm to lure,
Alone could move this heart of mine.

For it reflects its rays from off
A heart which Heaven hath woo'd and won;
Before whose shrine e'en saints would doff
Their crowns, its sacredness to own.

Those cheeks that have so brightly glow'd
For me with smiles were wont to move;
Those lips through which sweet whispers flow'd,
And bathed my soul with dews of love,

How soft their tinted rosy hue!
As if caught from the aerial bow
Which bends along the boundless blue,
By glittering sunbeams made to glow.

That beauteous brow, how smooth and fair!
Forsooth it seems that Nature tried
Her loftiest skill, imprinting there
Beauties which heaven to earth denied.

And eyes,—such matchless eyes as thine!
Such darkly midnight rolling eyes!—
To paint would be a task divine,
Nor muse nor artist could devise.

But ye who would discern their charm,
One moment bask beneath their glow;
Though cold thy heart, it then must warm,
And fast its blood must ebb and flow!

This dainty boon, through many a day
Worn nearest, dearest to my heart,
Shall chase its clouds of grief away,
And springs of virtue newly start.

Through life it ne'er shall pass from me;
And when shall start the ebbing breath,
Quick, fast, and fever'd, it shall be
A light amid the gloom of Death!

A VALENTINE.

SURELY thou art a goddess ! and, as such,
 Wakens my heart devotional to thee ;
As lute-strings 'neath a master-minstrel's touch
 Fill all the azure air with melody,
 So while thine image, or its memory,
Before my raptured vision bright doth move,
A magic, fraught with every charm of love,
 Pervades my spirit, like the calm of thought
That o'er thee always hovers, thus to prove
 The matchless purity thy soul hath caught,
As though 'twere part of that we dream above.
 So now I bring a tribute, simply wrought,
Of passion pouring wildly on thy shrine
Its every ebb and flow, for all its fount is thine!*

* By arranging first letter of first line with second letter of second line, and the succeeding letters of their respective lines in a consecutive order, a full name will appear.



PROPHECY OF AARON BURR.

WHY broken are my slumbers? why
 Moves the dark fiend Ambition still
Athwart my vision, with his eye
 Flashing the lightnings of a will
That does not cower? Why are my dreams
 Haunted by spectres such as stole
 In frenzy through Jugurtha's soul
When lured too far by glory's beams
Up the high steep of Fame?* Ah! say;
 For is not hope fled, which erst shone,
With more than meteoric ray,
 Above that pageant of a throne?

Nations respond, and say that crime,
 By wild ambition urged, has doom'd
My name to be a mock of time,
 And all my nobler deeds consumed.
The basest villain smiles with scorn,
 And points to me, and says, "Behold
 A man to selfish glory sold,
A traitor to his country born,
A Cain-mark'd tyrant who could lay
 A brother bleeding in the dust;

* See Rollin, vol. i., chap. ii.

And that, a crown had led the way,
His heart would deem the treason just.*

This ye decree ! but that the frown
Of fate forbade my brow to bear
The diadem and regal crown
Which boyish dreams had pictured there,
Yet has my heart not still been taught
To bow in silence to its doom ;
And though its hopes are wrapp'd in gloom,
And all the phantom deeds it wrought
Been smother'd, like the meteor's glare
Which pours along the sky its flame,
My spirit will not yet despair,—
Again they'll rise and light my fame !

Again will rise ! Ay ! now behold,
As moves the curtain back of time,
The secrets which to me unfold
Of wrong, oppression, and of crime.
Hush ! hear ye not the sound of strife ?
But no : my ear alone has heard
The battle's thunder which has stirr'd
The element of human life.
Northward the storm is gathering,—
The lightning's gleam, the thunder's roar,

* “A maxim advanced by Etioeles in a tragedy called ‘The Phœnicians,’ and which Cæsar had always in his mouth : *If justice may be violated at all, it is when a throne is in question.*”—ROL-
LIN: *Introduction.*

Louder and louder, while the wing
Of Death sweeps o'er yon sunny shore.*

Thou lovely land! thy flowery fields
Are reeking with thine own sons' blood,—
Who die in vain; for freedom yields
Before the unpitying battle's flood.
Thy prayer to heaven in vain was borne!
For Mercy weeps not o'er thee now:
But from thy young and happy brow
The wreath of glory has been torn.
And fetter'd now I see thee stand,
As beauteous as the Grecian slave,
And yet more sad; but what bold hand
Will strike thy liberty to save?

Ye cursed me when Ambition lured
My soul to strike for kingly glory;
And that I fail'd, my name obscured
By treason fills the page of story.
But I forgive thee now! To wear
A Pisistratus' crown I strove,
Which e'en a Solon might approve;†
But that wild hope has been a snare,
Such as the one which freedom gave
To thee to rend oppression's chain,
And make thee something more than slave;
For both have been, alas! but vain.

* Referring to the late war between the States.

† See Rollin, vol. i., bk. v., *a* viii.

Yet still prophetic sweeps my eye
 Adown the darken'd aisle of ages ;
And direr scenes are sweeping by
 Than yet have fill'd historic pages.
A throne above my country stands—
 A regal sceptre grimly waves
 Above a noble race of slaves,
Who sit, with fetter'd feet and hands,
Supinely round their master's throne,
 Doing him homage ! Is thy dream
Of liberty, great Washington,
 Vouchsafed as thou would have it seem ?

And yet once more ! Behold the vision !
 Enough ! my country's free—her fields
Smile in their bloom a new Elysian,
 While to her power the tyrant yields.
Around her brow once more the wreath
 Of glory has been twined, as fair
 As that which erst was blooming there
Ere blighted by a Northern breath.
And Liberty, heaven-born queen !
 With beauty smiling on her brow,
Above my country sits serene,
 Sceptred in right and justice now.

But it is done ! The vision's past !
 No more to me the column'd years
In grandeur tower along the vast
 And dreadful future ! What appears

Destined is writ. Yet I can smile
Above the ruin which is wrought,
Nor feel one pang upbraid the thought,
Though it beseech a funeral pile.
For in my dreams of glory thou
Wert made the queen of empires, deck'd
In more than orient splendor—how,
Alas, have such wild dreams been wreck'd!

But thou, mad heart, be still! 'Tis *done*!
The frantic picture in the brain,
Of sceptre, diadem, and throne,
Has vanish'd, ne'er to wake again!
Yet that I thus was lured, I feel
No vain regret perturb my heart;
For, freed again, its blood would start,
And deeds still mightier would reveal.
But such is not! And thus I stand
Fetter'd in spirit—robed in gloom;
Then fare thee well! thou lovely Land!
Thy heroine virtue wrought my doom.



A PARAPHRASE.

A SCHOOL EXERCISE.

“The strongest passions allow us some rest, but Vanity keeps us in perpetual motion.”

“What a dust do I raise!” says a fly upon a coach’s wheel. “At what a rate do I drive!” says the fly upon a horse’s back.

“Oh, how the Passions, insolent and strong,
Bear our weak minds their rapid course along;
Make us the madness of their will obey;
Then die, and leave us to our griefs a Prey!”—CRABBE.

THUS every passion will relent,
When waken’d to its highest state;
For when its wildest fury’s spent,
It will unconsciously abate.
No mortal breast could brook the pain
That it would bring, were it to dwell
Forever there: ’twould be a bane,
And turn the soul to deeds of hell.

’Twould be assuaged though worlds were lost;
Though life-blood had the debt to pay!
Thus all unmindful of the cost
’Twould run unguided in its way.
’Twould, like a wild tornado, spread
Destruction o’er whate’er it passed,

Despite the prayers of hearts that bled,
And death on either side would cast.

But then the mighty Power Supreme,
That rules the ways of mortal man,
Guides onward, like a gentle stream,
Each passion, as it first began.
A stream, when torrents in it pour,
Runs high and madly on its way;
But when the ocean's reach'd, no more,
Or long, does it thus hoisterous stay.

And so the passions, too, may swell
One moment wild and high;
But when appeased, they cease to dwell
Within the breast, and thus they die.

* * * * *

But Vanity's the "food of fools,"
There is no remedy to stay;
And though they little learn at schools,
That little is enough, they say.
For their opinion is that time
Has never such a wonder known;
Their deeds are matchless and sublime,
They tower, unrival'd, all alone.

But who are these,—these wondrous men,
That uneclipsed in glory stand,
That shine with radiancy serene
Above the greatest of the land?

Ah! who are they? Is one a Lee?
 Whom nations praise with hearts elate!
 Is he the wondrous prodigy?
 The one on whom hath smiled fair Fate?

No, never! but yon silly fop
 Who "sports a goatee and moustache!"
 A fancy cane, with pinchbeck top—
 A little credit, and less cash!

* * * * *

This is the fly that makes the dust
 When riding on a coach's wheel;
 But who would such a wonder trust,
 Or in his august presence kneel?
 This is the fly that drives so fast
 When seated on a horse's back,
 He who so cruelly doth blast
 The hopes of many maids—alack!



TO MARY.

WHEN the moon beams
O'er silent streams,
Thou in my dreams
Of all forms art the dearest;
And when in thought
By day, if aught
Is loved or sought,
My heart holds thee the nearest.

And though the fair
And debonair,
With charms as rare
As fancy bright e'er measured,
Around me smile
With airy wile,
My heart the while
Keeps still thine image treasured.

For in the time
Of boyhood's prime,
Ere sin and crime
Its core had warp'd and wither'd,
Thy gentle form,
With living charm,
That soul did warm
Which now by grief is shiver'd.

But, ah ! no more
Thy smiles gleam o'er
My heart's dark core,
Awaking hope and gladness ;
But every glow
Of joy, in woe
Has sunken low,
Leaving my soul in madness.

Yet though thy glance
And soft parlance
Shall ne'er entrance,
As in the days now over,
Still will my heart
With fondness start
To where thou art,
And there in spirit hover.

And when shall beam,
With silver gleam,
O'er tower and stream,
Night's torches light and airy,
In vision sweet,
With joy replete,
Our souls shall meet,
And love be ours, Mary.



TO HER TO WHOM 'TIS MOST
APPROPRIATE.

FARE thee well! we part forever!
 Though, fair maid, it gives me pain,
I must leave, and quickly sever
 Love and hope that were in vain.

I will linger, though I leave thee,
 In my dreams around thee still;
But how much thou didst bereave me
 With thy too obdurate will!

Thou canst never know, ah, never!
 Though I would that it could be;
Then that love, that thou dost sever,
 Might again return to me.

For the vows by thee once plighted,
 When thy heart beat high and warm
With the love I had requited
 By bright Cupid's magic charm,

Have been coldly, rudely broken,
 But have left a cureless sting
In my heart, to me a token
 What the vows of maidens bring.

Had my love been unrequited,
I could then some solace find
In the thought no hope was blighted
By the changing of the mind.

But thou once didst love me kindly;
Now to spurn me thus is more
Than a heart that loved so blindly
Can, or will, or should endure.

Faithless maiden, list, oh, list thee
To these tender tones of one
Who in other days caress'd thee,
When thy heart was all his own!

And should future years revert thee
To the memories of the past,
Think, though scorn'd, he'll not forget thee,
But will love thee to the last.

But I'll cease, and not disturb thee
With the thoughts I scarce can brook;
Still am constant, still I love thee,
Yet by thee I am forsook!

1869.



WENDELL DE WAVERLY.

I.

KNOW ye that land where first the smile of Spring
Awakes the flowers, and bids the birds to sing?*

Where verdant plains forever charm the eye
Beneath the glow of never-clouded sky,
And where, around whose *arbor vitæ* shores,
The Gulf's deep voice perpetual music pours?
'Tis mine to know, and there reverts the strain
Which I would sing, nor hope to sing in vain.

II.

Once in that lovely land was rear'd a child
Around whose path auspicious fortune smiled.
His features, with Mosaic beauty wrought,†
Each passing eye with admiration caught;
And, with precocious mind, he seem'd to reach
Beyond his years, and elder children teach.
And oft was he beheld in mimic show
Climbing the steep of fame, his cheeks aglow

* "Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle."

The Bride of Abydos.

† See Josephus, vol. i. book ii. chap. ix., concerning the beauty of Moses when a child.

With rapture of his triumphs. But he saw
 No pageant grand upon the distance draw ;
 No gorgeous throne, around whose base the blood
 Of human millions in one vortex stood,
 Crying to heaven ; and no famish'd poor
 Cursing their lord while bowing to adore.
 For in his young heart had a mother's tears
 And kindly prayers awaken'd Christian fears.
 Yet still, as childhood is the age of hope,
 He deck'd his young sky's bright and sunny scope
 With stars and rainbows ; and the drifting clouds
 He call'd good angels, robed in spotless shrouds.

But all his hours were not so happy sped ;
 For oft, when tired of sport, he came to tread
 The threshold of his home, a mother's tears
 Dissolved his heart with more than boyish fears.
 The story of her grief he knew full well ;
 But still his little heart afresh would swell
 With a responsive throb, alas ! that she,
 His widow'd mother, could not happy be.

And thus the tale is told as oft by her
 With sighs repeated, when the gentle stir
 Of evening zephyrs cool'd the brow of night
 And bade her heart be calm : " When life was bright,
 And young, and beautiful, before me past
 The real picture of that vision cast
 By fancy of the future, when the glow
 Of girlhood tinged my cheek. Each ebb and flow
 Of my young heart awaken'd some new dream
 Of happiness, until the very beam

Of bliss celestial round my being shone
Entrancing in its ray. And not alone
To me was Heaven's bright smile auspicious lent ;
For he who was my girlhood's idol went
In and out before me ; and thy smile,
Sweet cherub boy, was sent, another wile
To bind my heart more closely unto earth—
Which ever stands a barrier to the birth
Of souls for Heaven. Day by day our bliss
Brighten'd existence, but to end in this.

It was a gloomy morn ! with features pale
And haggard as in death, my bridal veil
He took and wreathed around my brow, and when
My face grew sad at what was passing then,
He bade me with a smile be bright again,
For he but wish'd to know what change was wrought
Within my features since our wedding. Taught
With *more* than woman's faith his slightest word
To trust and heed, though with foreboding stirr'd
Of something evil, took his parting kiss ;
And thus, alas ! was seal'd our sunny bliss.

An hour went by—another came—and none
Return'd to calm my anguish, which had grown
Beyond endurance ; for prophetic love
Did reach into futurity and move
The secrets of the fates. The clock's third stroke,
Alas ! seem'd like a new age had awoke.
I then look'd forth : as swift as speed of horse
Could bear his rider on his rapid course,
A herald came, and thus in few was said :
'A duel has been fought—your husband's dead !' "

III.

Thus would she end the story of that grief
Which robb'd her youth of beauty, and made brief
Her mortal life. Alas, how brief! for, lo!
Scarce on the brow of Waverly the glow
Of eighteen summers shone, when came these words,
"In heaven meet thy mother!" which records
Her last fond blessing, and solacing prayer
That, though dissever'd here, they might meet there.

But this was scarce consoling to that heart
Which, wild with grief, would from his bosom start.
He look'd around him, and he stood alone
On life's dark shore, with not a heart to own
A kindred feeling, or inspire his breast
With those fond hopes a mother's prayers had blest.
And who, alas! can know the pangs of one
Who on life's stream is left to drift alone?
The world hath many heart-aches, but the worst,
The' unkindest, is to be thus early curst!

Some months went by, and every passing tongue
Express'd much wonder that a heart so young
Should bow so long with grief; for scarce a smile
Had o'er his perfect lips been seen the while.
E'en had the eye of beauty lost its charm,
Which erst had power his inmost soul to warm.
All pleasures passed unnoticed; but where good
Could be attain'd, there unabash'd he stood.
His friends with pride beheld his rising fame,
As many a heart with blessings breathed his name.

Yet, in these dreary months, there was but one
To whom his secret hopes were wholly known ;
And this was she whose almost infant love
Had been his rainbow, arching life above.
To her for solace, in his hours of grief,
He ever turn'd, to find a sure relief.
His dreams of glory she beheld arise
In effigy along life's dawning skies ;
For every thought which sway'd his youthful breast
Was known to hers, and by her own was blest.
But envious fate grew wroth, and trusting youth
Was made a prey to tongues that poison truth.*
The spring of love had vanish'd, with its flowers,
With all its fairy-tales, and sunny bowers ;
And that bright sky, so late with rainbows spread,
With storms is cover'd—and the heart is dead.

IV.

To paint a reckless life, to tear the mask
From off the hidden heart, is sure a task
The pen might fain be happy to forego ;
But this the tale demands, and mine to know
And to reveal. Wendell de Waverly, when
He found his last demulcent hope had been
Only an exhalation as the rest,
He cursed his being ; and with hopeless quest

* "Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;
But whispering tongues can poison truth."
Coleridge's Christabel.

For the unanswering bliss of life, he sought
The glowing wine-cup to extinguish thought.

He spurn'd his dearest friends, and in saloons
Was mostly found at mornings, and at noons,
And sure at night ; while in each loathsome game
With eagerness he plunged, until his name,
As once for goodness, was familiar known
In every low and wicked haunt of town.

His friends, not yet despairing, would with tears
Plead for his swift return from ruin ; but with jeers
He gave them answer ! But there still was one
Who whilom in his boyhood was alone
His bosom comrade ; unto him full oft
He would incline his ear, and answer soft.

This generous friend would argue of the past—
Those pure, bright days—and of his mother's last
And fondest blessing ; but his heart, yet hard,
Would every prayer of fond concern discard.

And then, at last, when other hopes were vain,
The name Endora sought his heart to gain,
He back recoil'd in madness from his friend,
And with an oath that gentle name did blend.
Its charm was lost, or had too great a charm ;
For through his veins his blood went coursing warm.
His wrathful eye, lit up with darkling gleam,
Seem'd like a madman's waken'd from a dream.
Oath after oath escaped his quivering mouth,
Till oaths had dried his tongue, as dries the drouth
The shrubbery of the plain ! Then on his heel
He turn'd away, and left his friend to feel

And bear the pangs his hasty wrath had wrought;
Himself a prey to more than anguish'd thought.

V.

The moon is waning on the brow of night,
And further falls her ghastly gleaming light
Ayont the mountain, whose long shadows paint
Upon the streams full many a picture quaint.
The stars grow less in lustre, as their ray
Fades from the earth along the Milky Way.
All now are sleeping, save the' ungodly few
Who tread the night with nothing good in view;
Save those whose hearts, imbued with sin and crime,
In riot madly stamp the stage of time.

But, lo! whose footsteps o'er yon verdant lawn
Is wending fast, as if he fear'd the dawn
Of morning would o'ertake him in his flight?
But hush! himself gives answer: "Oh, thou bright
And lovely being, whose entrancing voice,
Even in this dread hour, might give the choice
Of life or death! across this green parterre
How often have we wanton'd with no fear
Of being reft asunder; but our dreams
Had deck'd futurity with living beams,
And more than living love! But vain is youth!
Is any promise born of hope a truth?
No; not recorded on the blotted page
Of any life-book writ in youth or age.
Ay! no; for she who calmly sleeps to-night
In yon fair mansion, blest with visions bright,

Unmindful of this heart whose life-drop flows
Only in token of the love that glows
Unquench'd within its core—ah! what of her?
Are not those vows, she early did aver,
Long years dissever'd? Are those hopes not fled
Which she inspired when all else dear was dead?
This desperate deed gives answer! Ah! 'twas here,
Upon this very cliff, I saw the first bright tear
Of love to glitter in her eye! But now,
Alas, how broken is that holy vow!
It was a night like this! no cloud remote
Along the radiant sky was seen to float.
Yon limpid stream is laughing just as free
As on that night her love she plighted me.

But let me calm my spirit, which is now
Aweary of this world; for, oh, my brow
Is bursting with its pangs! Yon mellow moon
Behind the mountain will be hidden soon.
Oh, thou bright Crescent! loveliest still of all
Whose light this world has blest since man's sad fall;
If man to fellow-man had been as kind
As thou to earth, they then this life would find
Not so unhappy—not so void of hope;
But, just as thou, along life's azure scope,
In hours of darkness, would their kindness shine—
A blessed beacon to that world divine.

Thy ray has almost vanish'd from my sight;
Yet, though obscured from mortal eye, this night
Within thy sphere, which I have loved so long,
My soul shall bask, and wake a loftier song.

Then fare thee well, thou lovely, lovely earth !
Hadst thou as much of kindness in thy birth
As thou hast beauty, oh, how blest were man !
But this is not our destiny ! The span
Of life is sorrowful as short ! I go ;
Yet will one heart be sad ? will one tear flow
That I am gone ? Endora, fare *thee well* !
For thy unkindness in my heart shall swell,
In this last hour, no feeling but of joy
Or of forgiveness ; but, as when a boy,
Will cherish now thy smile, and let it be,
Amid the gloom of death, a light to me !
I'm loth to leave thee, but once more farewell !"

"What hand would his own life dis sever ?" fell
Upon his soul with more than mortal power ;
Aghast he turn'd—who faced him in that hour ?
"Wendell de Waverly ! is it thou whose hand
Would force his soul before his God to stand ?"

With pallid cheek and quivering lips he cried,
"Endora, is it thou ?" and at her side
Trembling he stood. "What supernatural charm,
In this most awful hour, hath led thy form
To wander here where spirits of the lost,
And mine, alone are in deep anguish tost ?"

"Ah ! 'twas thy better angel, who all night
Hath through my visions swept with eager flight,
And ceaseless warning of some dreadful deed ;
And here I came, and thus thy life is freed.
With love I heard thee breathe my name, and, oh,
How wildly did the life-blood ebb and flow

Across my bleeding breast, which has been torn
With pain so long—so long in silence borne—
The passion of my girlhood which I deem'd
By thee neglected and forgot, nor dream'd
We should be reunited save in death!"

"Endora, by the music of that breath
Which tunes thy voice, and by thy love-lit eye,
Which has the power to bid me live or die,
I thought myself forgotten,—thought thy heart,
Which is so true, was torn from love apart.
But, Heaven be blest! it was our trusting youth
That sank a prey to tongues that poison truth."

His voice gave o'er, but on her cheek the kiss
Of love was echo to his young soul's bliss.
Their vows anew were plighted as the dawn
With orient jewels deck'd the smiling lawn.
And, with their young hearts glowing with new hope
And brighter joy, they saw the future ope
Wiser and better on their raptured view,
While fancy's gaudy wings along the distance flew.

VI.

Oh, how much happier is that hapless heart
Whose bleeding core has long endured the smart
And sting of anguish and of hope deferr'd,
At length, in hour unthought, its life is stirr'd
Unto its inmost soul by some sweet bliss,
Which is not frequent felt in worlds like this.

The life of Waverly was not wholly cursed,
Though much and long on Sorrow's bosom nursed.

For through his vision flits again that dream
Which made his early years so happy seem.
The throng is gather'd in the nuptial hall
Where sylphic dance, and music's melting call
Awakes, with bounding joy, the heart of each and all.

I see her at the altar bow,
A blush upon her cheek;
A diadem upon her brow;
With voice so low the fitting vow
I hear her gently speak,
And she is happy now!

What lovelier tale is told than love
Paints on the maiden's brow
When soft her lips in whispers move
To plight the marriage-vow?
Ah! are the hearts of those above
More blest than she is now?

VII.

One paragraph of Wendell's life is told,
And blotted much the parchment, but 'tis roll'd
Together as the world shall be, and seal'd;
Another leaf is turn'd, which, when reveal'd,
Will end his life-book, and, though sadly vain,
It still may bear some moral in its strain.

The honey-moon of brightly wedded love
Did o'er their hearts with more than pleasure move.
The first blest pair of human kind scarce knew
In Eden more of happiness than threw

Around their lives its richly golden chain,
By Heaven's pure blessing link'd, but which in twain,
Alas! was rent asunder when that span
Of life, so short and beautiful, began
To fire those hopes of glory which had died
In those dark years so madly swept aside.

For Death's rude fingers, jealous of their bliss,
Swept o'er her heart-strings, and impress'd his kiss
On her fair lips, and from her soft blue eyes
Dissolved that lustre born of azure skies.
Oh, how was wrung that manly heart with grief!
Why was his joy restored, if it so brief
Must shed a radiance o'er the path of life?
Why did not fate permit the end of strife,
Which is coeval with existence, in
That desperate hour, though it were more than sin?
No voice comes back to calm the troubled heart;
The fates, alas! no oracles impart
To mortal ears, but dumb upon their throne
They watch the gasping soul, and catch its dying moan.

VIII.

The thunder-tone of battle echoes far,
And bids young freedom stem the tide of war.
Mercy has pleaded, yet still her burning prayer,
Borne up to heaven, has found no entrance there;
But o'er our sunny shore the courser black
Of death is sweeping with his ruthless pack
Of hell-hounds at his heels, nor stoops to save
Even the form of beauty from the grave.

Oh, when shall Cain-mark'd moguls cease to sway
The sword of empire o'er their kindred clay?
When shall their brothers' blood, whose cry is made,
Go up to Heaven, and bring down Heaven's aid?
For o'er our bleeding Greece what eye can glance,
And not with pity melt, or raise for her the lance?
As Scotia's lovely queen, all fetter'd, lay
Before the avenging pride of England's sway,
So stands the South with bleeding heart, to-day,
Before the unpitying North! But let my theme
Not here be broken by the saddest dream
Which thrills a Southern heart! I said the voice
Of battle roused her people to the choice
Of death or slavery; and, as taught to feel
None but the dastard ever brook to kneel
Before the' oppressor's rod, full many a son
Of freedom rose, and laid their young lives down
A sacrifice for her. Among the first
The sword of Wendell from its scabbard burst.
He had no loved one in whose cause to fight
But that of country and her free-born right.
Yet this was more to him than life; and where
He saw her banner proudly floating, there
His gallant arm was raised, while blow on blow
For her was struck, till he himself laid low.

On old Virginia's life-drop-reeking shore,
Where glows that twice-bought field of tears and gore,
His dauntless soul, with many a comrade's brave,
Went down to death their bleeding land to save.
He fell as from the earth the daylight sped,
As from the field the vanquish'd foemen fled.

And as of old a dying hero lay
Stretch'd on the field where raged the mad affray,
And still rejoiced when told his country wore
High on her brow the laurel stain'd with gore,
So Wendell fell, triumphant in his death,
And bless'd his country with his latest breath.
He gasp'd her name, and that of his young bride,
As Orpheus, floating on the Stygian tide,
Still call'd Eurydice, whose radiant name
The hills in echo wafted on to fame.

Then let him sleep, as sleeps our country's brave,
In honor'd turf—in more than honor'd grave.
For her he died—will she deny a tear
To moist the dust which wraps his lowly bier?
Ah! no; for o'er her every hero's tomb
With spring she comes, and wafts a fragrant bloom;
When autumn spreads his sable wings above,
'Tis but the emblem of her deathless love;
In summer's sunbeams and in winter's snows,
Her soul's deep prayer shall bless their calm repose.
Then sleep, thou equal hero of my song
And of thy country, with her peerless throng!
Thy praise is sung, but what shall better tell
Thy deeds than say, *He for our country fell?*



TO HER WHO FEELS THEM MOST.

“ Poor Desdemona ! I am glad thy father’s dead.

* * * * *

* * * * * Did he live now,

This sight would make him do a desperate turn,

Yea, curse his better angel from his side,

And fall to reprobation.”

AH ! faded is the diadem,
And from the crown of life
Is lost the rarest, richest gem,
That shone, with lustre rife,
Bright as the Star of Bethlehem,
Amid the soul’s dark strife !

And from the eye of him who caught
Its radiance as a spell,
Has fled the picture that it wrought
Within the brain so well,—
Has vanish’d every hope which sought
With it alone to dwell.

I gaze upon its molten dust,
Which now before me lies,
And question Fate if this is just,
The boon I so much prize
To blast forever, as the trust
Which friendship oft belies.

There is no voice from out the deep
Of that unkind Unknown;
But there the cruel Sisters keep
Their vigils all alone,
And watch the broken-hearted weep
With hearts unmoved as stone.

That jewel rare, of life the charm,
No more remains to me!
My heart is frozen which was warm
With passion wild for thee;
And I am weary of that storm
Which lull'd may never be.

I had not thought such pangs to brook;
I did not dream them mine;
But turning o'er of life's young book
Another page, as thine,
Behold it there! I will not look—
But bring me hither wine!

Thou born of Hell! of thee I claim
The solace of an hour,
To cool the frenzy and to tame
The fury of that power
Which pours upon my soul its flame
Of woe, and bids me cower.

The' indignant fiends burst forth, and, lo!
Above the wreck of life
They fling the fire-brands of woe,
To burn amid the strife,

And drink the life-drops as they flow
From Grief's deep-cutting knife !

The fire of frenzy in the brain
At length has lull'd to rest ;
And though still sounds the hopeless strain
Of sorrow in the breast,
Like echoes of a prayer in vain,
Still would I have *thee* blest.

Ah ! shiver'd is the dearest boon
Which life had promised me ;
And from my hapless heart how soon
Dissever'd hope and thee !
Nor yet is changed my night to noon,
As I had dream'd should be.

But I shall ever hold thee still,
Forgetting all thy wrong,
The dearest object which can fill
My soul, and wake its song ;
And if there's aught can sorrow kill,
To thee the spells belong !

I go ; but when within thy heart
The memory of my form
To life a picture bright shall start,
And with affection warm
Thy gentle bosom, know thou art
Of my curst life the charm !

Then fare thee well ! thou hapless child !
From thee I now am gone ;
I grieve that thou wert thus beguiled,
That fate should on thee frown ;
Yet it is done, and I am wild,—
A wreck on life alone !

AUGUST 3, 1872.



THE YEARS OF YOUTH.

TO "TOM," COUSIN TO THE AUTHOR.

"Life is a lie, and love a cheat."

FAIR Colorado ! on thy shore,
Which wanton Spring has just array'd
In robes of green, as decks the maid
Her mistress, I recline, and pore,
With philosophic eye, thy waters o'er.
'Twas here in childhood first I play'd,
When life was happy, young, and bright ;
And o'er its sky no cloud, or night,
Was seen to float, or rudely frown ;
But birdling hope, in ermine down,
Her pinions spreading on the air,
Chased through the future many a fair
And fairy phantom, as if life
Were but with stars and rainbows rife.

'Twas here—how bright the picture seems !—
First love, with all its rosy dreams,
Its blushing smile and timid kiss,
Enchanted life with that sweet bliss
Which but the breast of boyhood knows
When passion first along it glows.

I see her yet : her long black hair
Is sporting with the Cupid air,
Whose amorous kisses but impart
The wildness of my own wild heart.
With tenderness her hand in mine,
As wont, I see it yet recline ;
And as the butterflies at play,
We chase the roseate hours away.

But ere I quit these smiling scenes,
And paint the gloom which intervenes,
My pencil would a picture trace
Of one, though not as fair of face
As she of whom I lately spake,
Yet was more true ; and not the flake
Which since was melted by the gleam
Of absence, or a fairer dream.

He was my *friend*—the first and best—
As shall be shown ere I divest
My spirit of the Muse's charm
And tear from her embraces warm.
Together first along these banks
We gambol'd in our boyish pranks,
Climbing yon hill with all the pride
Of Switzers up the Alps' steep side ;
With gun and dog, to bird and hare
We were a terror stalking there.
And thus our young lives brightly passed—
Alas, how brightly and how fast !
But that deep friendship which they taught
Has never yet been less to thought ;

For as still flows thy tide, old river,
So it hath flow'd, and shall forever.

Fair Colorado! on thy shore,
Where now I muse, with boyhood's years
Vanish'd and gone, to me appears
That scene of loveliness no more;
And as I watch thy waters pour

Along thy banks, 'tis but with tears.
For what is left me now of joy?
There stands my old home in alloy!
The voices which once made it glad
Are hush'd forever, and the sad
And sobbing dirge of winds alone
Is heard to waken there its tone.

Oh, how deserted is that place
Where first a mother's warm embrace
My infant heart with joy made bright!
Where first a father's smile of light
Inspired such hopes as never yet
Have, in their radiance, wholly set!

But let me turn from what I view
With that deep anguish such as few,
Alas! with years so young, have known,
And trace a fairer page, if one,
In years succeeding, has been writ.
The leaf is turn'd. What sayeth it?

Fair river! thy bright name is here
Recorded not, but with that tear,
Which blear'd the parchment lately turn'd,
It was, in silent gloom, inurn'd.

O'er other scenes 'tis mine to trace,
And view full many a stranger face.
And she whose smile is blent with thine
In memory now alone may shine ;
For Fate hath sever'd hope from each—
Teaching what only such can teach.

Other fond smiles from other eyes
Have waked my heart with restless sighs ;
And Fancy, with her pencil light,
Hath fashion'd, for the youthful sight,
A lovelier picture, which fair hope
Hath promised shall illumine the scope
Of life's blue sky forever ! Ah,
How does this coquette, call'd a star,
Trifle with life, as does the fair ;

With the young heart, whose only boon
Is the wild anguish of despair !

Ay ! not more kind than they whose shoon
Trampled of old by Thermodoon.*
I've tasted all the sweets of love,—

The glance, the smile, the kiss, the tear ;
And this is all its pleasures prove,—

One hour of bliss for many a year
Of sorrow and of conscience taught
To sting—not sear—the soul of thought.

Of one I spake who was my friend.
We too were sever'd, but the years

* A river of Asia Minor, famous for the abode of the Amazons.

Which made life's journey widely tend,
Left each unchanged. Thus much appears
Since boyhood fled, and we again
Have met to share each other's pain
And joy, if aught perchance may be,
And breathe those thoughts which are not free
From the deep dungeon of the mind
Till then—as they who know us find.

Sure, other friendships have been form'd
In these long years, as each was warm'd
By the wild passionate fire of love
For others than the ones we strove
Never to forget; but though are changed
These heart disorders, we are not estranged.
And *this* is friendship!—such as touch'd
The heart of Damon, and there clutch'd
Unto the death; and thus our souls,
As the bright syzygy above,
Will be united in that love
Till o'er our spirits Lethe rolls.

Then with thy name, thou first of friends,
The echoes of my harp shall rise
Ere it with wakeless silence blends,
Or, wrapp'd in sorrow, tuneless lies.
How many a hope, while in its spring,
Hath vanish'd from my fondling view,
As flies the bird, on wanton wing,
Beyond the only home it knew!
And as deserted seems that spot
When its bright tenant far hath fled.

So is my heart a lonely grot,

A seeming charnel of the dead.

Friendships have faded—all but thine ;

E'en though I thought them more divine

Than earthly in their hour of birth,

Yet they have proved themselves but earth,

And, with a Carthaginian mind,*

Have taught that lesson most unkind.

The garland bright, from Beauty's bowers,

Which love had twined in happier hours

And with it crown'd my brow, is dead,

And not a flower remains to shed

Its fragrance round the path of life ;

But sorrow, with its serrate knife,

Hath pierced my bosom to its core

And spilt its almost vital gore.

To Love I am no longer slave !

And Beauty's voice in vain shall crave

The lost allegiance of my heart ;

For it is weary of her art,

And would in freedom beat again,

Nor brook, as erst, her power of pain.

Then what is left of all those dreams

Which fill'd my early years with beams ?

Do none remain ? Ay ! yes, to me

Ambition still is left as free,

"Anciently, to denote a *knaveish, deceitful mind*, no expression was thought more proper and emphatical than this: *A Carthaginian mind*."—ROLLIN, book ii., sec. viii.

And, with his more than burning eye,
Irradiates futurity.

My mistress is no more the same :
Fame is my mistress ! and her name,
Breathed ever by my lips, shall give
That mad desire to do and live.

I have, in fancy, seen her face
Lit with its rich celestial grace ;
And as was fired her darkling eye,
Methought, who would not doubly die
To win one glance when died the flame
Of life in echo with her name ?

Thou more than Siren ! 'tis thy voice
Can make the soul of youth rejoice,
E'en though the whisper sweet of love
Is felt no more its deeps to move.

Love first the boyish heart inspires ;
Avarice the soul of manhood fires ;
But youth, dull to the voice of each,
By Fame is buoy'd her goal to reach.
With her as guide, what burning heart

Would not aspire to climb that mount
Whose towering summit lies athwart
The pathway to that radiant clime
Which is the heaven of earth and time,

And there, within its crystal fount,
Alay that thirst which sleepless years
Have borrow'd from the brine of tears ?
Ah ! this were more than e'en the bliss
Of dreams of love, or the first kiss

Which seals two young hearts when they beat
But with one thought—one passion sweet.

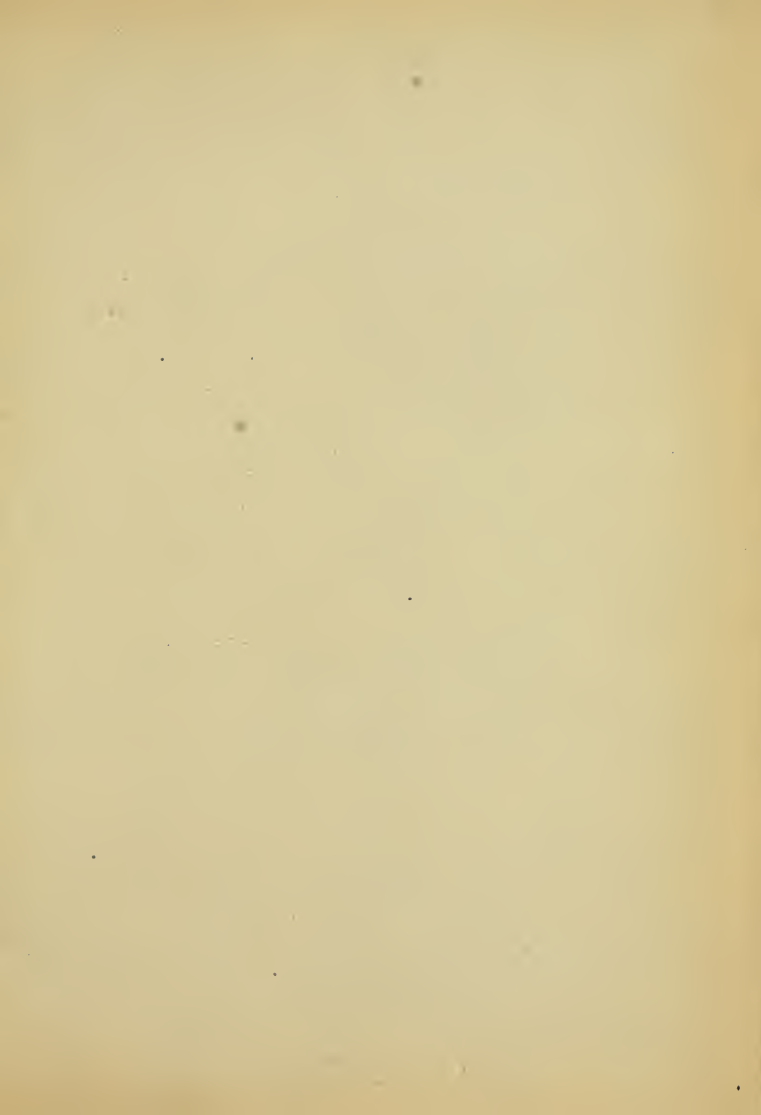
Then let me by the voice of Fame

Be lull'd when comes that dreamless sleep,
And, breathing still her burning name,
Along the vault of heaven sweep!

THE END.







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